

# Women in the Bible

## Book of Esther

Lesson 27

### Day 1

1. Esther is one of the well-known accounts in the Old Testament. What do you remember about Esther?

### Read Esther 1:1-22

2. Chapter 1 establishes the background for the book of Esther. King Ahasuerus, generally identified with Xerxes I or Artaxerxes, reigned from 485–464 BC when the Jews were captives in Persia.
  - a. How large was the Persian empire during King Ahasuerus's reign?
  - b. King Ahasuerus made a feast in verses 3 and 4. What was the purpose of this first feast?
  - c. In verse 5- 7, the king held a second feast lasting 7 days. We see the examples of the vast riches of the Persian Empire. List some of the items that indicate that show the kingdom's wealth.
    - i.
    - ii.
    - iii.
    - iv.
    - v.
    - vi.
  - d. Verse 8 indicates that drinking is not compulsory. Why do you think this detail is mentioned?

- e. How would you characterize King Ahasuerus from verses 1-8?
- 
3. In verse 9-12, Queen Vashti is introduced. Because Vashti was queen before Esther, we can see how the women were treated in this culture at this time.
    - a. Why does King Ahasuerus order the eunuchs to bring Queen Vashti before him at the feast?
  
    - b. Why do you think Queen Vashti refuses to go to the King although it was a command?
  
  4. From whom does the King seek counsel to deal with Vashti?
    - a. Why does Memucan suggest that Vashti be dethroned and replaced?
  
    - b. Based on verses 9-20, how women were viewed in Esther's culture?
  
    - c. How much value does the King place on the opinions of the men that surround him to make decisions?
  
  5. Consider the Lord's providence in allowing Vashti to be dethroned. In the Book of Esther, we see the Lord's hand move to protect his people who are in captivity. How does this comfort you during difficult seasons in your life?

## Day 2

### Read Esther 2: 1-21

1. There is a four-year span between Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. At this point, King Ahasuerus remembers his former queen and the events of the past. What do his servants recommend to King Ahasuerus to make him feel better?
  
2. In verses 5-7, we are introduced to Esther and her uncle, Mordecai. How did they end up in Persia?
  - a. Based on the information in these verses, how would you describe Mordecai?
  
  - b. What do we find out about Esther?
  
3. Based on historical accounts, we know that 400 young women were selected to be “interviewed” by King Ahasuerus to be Queen Vashti’s replacement. In verses 8-9, we see Esther’s experience at the palace.
  - a. What is different about her experience compared to the other young women?
  
  - b. What does this tell you about God’s favor for his people in the midst of trials?
  
  - c. How does this bless you?
  
4. Based on verses 10 and 11, why do you think Mordecai paced in front of the court of the women’s quarters every day?

5. Verses 12-14 describe the elaborate and extensive preparations for each of the young women before they met with the King.
  - a. What do these elaborate preparations for the women tell you about King Ahasuerus?
  
  - b. What was the fate of the young women after spending the night with the king?
  
6. In verses 15-18, we see that Esther finds “favor in the sight of all who saw her.”
  - a. Why do you think Esther finds favor with so many people that she encounters?
  
  - b. How does this help her when she finally meets the king?
  
7. Based on verses 19-20, why is Esther so obedient? How does this benefit her?
  
8. In verses 21-23, what does Mordecai discover that he reports to Queen Esther?

### **Day 3**

#### **Read Esther 3:1-15 and 4:1-17**

1. In chapter 3:1-6, King Ahasuerus promotes Haman, the Agagite. (*The Agagites were descendants of the Amalekites.*)
  - a. Why do you think that Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman? (see Deuteronomy 25:17-19; Judges 6:2-4)
  
  - b. Why does Haman get so angry that he wants to destroy all the Jews?
  
  - c. Do you think Mordecai was right to disrespect Haman?

2. In verses 8-11, how does Haman convince King Ahasuerus to turn against the Jews in Persia?
  - a. What does this tell you about Haman?
  
3. What decree does Haman send out to the whole kingdom in the name of the king?
  - a. Why were the people of Shushan perplexed by the decree?
  
4. In chapter 4:1-3, how do Mordecai and the Jews in the kingdom react to the decree?
  - a. What is the purpose of sackcloth and ashes? (see Jeremiah 6:26, 2 Samuel 3:31)
  
5. In verses 4-8, how does Esther find out about Haman's plan?
  - a. What does Mordecai ask Esther to do?
  
6. In verses 10-12, Why does Esther hesitate to make supplication to the king on behalf of her people?
  
  
7. How does Mordecai convince Esther to speak to the king in verses 13-14?
  - a. How does this prompt you to step up when the Lord calls you to do something?

8. What does Esther ask Mordecai and her maids to do to help her?

#### **Day 4**

#### **Read Esther 5:1-14 and 6:1-14**

1. In chapter 5:1-2, Esther goes into the inner court of the king's palace to see the king.
  - a. Why does she wait 3 days before seeing the king?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. How does Esther prepare to visit the king?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. What would have happened if the king had not extended the golden scepter to her?
  
2. In verses 3-5, Esther has an opportunity to request up to half the kingdom from the king, but she does not make her true request known right away.
  - a. Why do you think she asks for the banquets with Haman instead?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. How does the king respond to her requests?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. What does this tell you about his feelings for Esther?
  
3. In verses 9-13, how does Haman respond to Queen Esther's invitation to the banquets?
  - a. What does this tell you about his character?
  
4. In verse 14, his wife Zeresh told Haman to request for Mordecai to be hanged on the gallows.
  - a. How is this a reflection of Haman's character?

- b. How does Zeresh's spirit contrast Esther's?
- 
- 5. In Chapter 6:1-3, the Lord intervenes with a sleepless night for the king. What does the king discover as the chronicles are read to him?
  
  - 6. Why is Haman in the outer court in verses 4-5?
  
  - 7. In verses 6-9, why does Haman make such a generous suggestion for the man whom the king delights to honor?
  
  - 8. How do you think Haman felt when he had to honor Mordecai instead of hanging him?

### **Day 5**

#### **Read Esther 7:1-10 and 8:1-17**

- 1. In verses 1-4, what petition does Queen Esther make on the second day of the banquet?
  
- 2. In verses 5-6, what does Esther reveal to the king that makes him angry?
  - a. What does the Bible say about acting out in anger? (See Ephesians 4:26)
  
- 3. In verses 7-8, what does Haman do that further aggravates the king?
  - a. Why does Haman react this way?

4. In verses 9-10, Haman's fate is determined. How does the Lord vindicate Mordecai?
5. How are the events in Esther:7 an example of Proverbs 1:10-19?
6. In chapter 8:1-2, how does King Ahasuerus reward Esther and Mordecai?
7. In verses 3-6, what does Esther request from the king although she and Mordecai are now safe?
8. In verses 7-8, what does King Ahasuerus grant Esther?
  - a. Why does the king not simply revoke Haman's decree?
9. What does Mordecai's decree state in verse 11?
  - a. How does the Lord protect the Jews through this decree?

## **Day 6**

### **Read Esther 9:1-32 and 10:1-3**

1. Esther 9:1 says, "On the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, the opposite occurred, in that the Jews themselves overpowered those who hated them." How does this statement give you courage in the midst of trials?

2. In Esther 9:1-5, how does the Lord bless Mordecai and the Jews?
  
3. In verses 6-12, how do Haman's evil actions affect his sons?
  
4. In verses 10, 15, 16, the phrase, "but they did not lay a hand on the plunder" is repeated. Why do you think the Jews did not take the plunder even though they were allowed in Esther 8:11?
  
5. In verses 26-28, what is Purim?
  - a. Why is Purim celebrated?
  
6. How is the book of Chronicles in our bible different from the one mentioned in Esther 10:2?
  
7. How is the Book of Esther a reflection of the way the Lord protected his people in Exodus?
  - a. What does this tell you about the Lord's love for Israel?
  
  - b. How should we as believers respond to God's love for Israel?