



L3L54: Esther Becomes Queen

Esther 1-2

After the declaration of Cyrus the Great many of the Jews who had been carried away as captives by the Babylonians, returned from captivity to Jerusalem. Under the new Medo-Persian empire some Jews, like the man named Mordecai, chose to stay in the land. Mordecai was raising Hadassah (Esther), a very beautiful young woman who had been orphaned. During this time, Queen Vashti had refused the king's command to come to him, and King Ahasuerus was searching the kingdom for a queen to replace her.

Discuss:

- Why was King Ahasuerus angry with Queen Vashti? What did his advisors tell him to do about it?
- Why do you think Esther was chosen to join the other young women in the palace? What special treatment was Esther given by Hegai, the custodian of the women?
- How did the King honor Esther as his chosen queen?
- Why do you think Mordecai told Esther not to reveal her Jewish identity?
- What did Mordecai do to save the king's life?



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Memory Challenge:

Esther 2:17

The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.



L3L55: Haman's Evil Plot

Esther 3-4

There was a man named Haman who was part of the king's court. Haman was an Agagite which means he was an Amalekite; the Amalekites were enemies of the Jews. Haman hated all Jews, but he especially hated Mordecai. Haman came up with a plot to kill all the Jews. He told King Ahasuerus that the Jews had different laws and that they did not obey the king's laws. Haman said the Jews did not deserve to live, and the king agreed. What they both didn't realize was that the new queen of Persia was also a Jew.

Discuss:

- Why did Haman especially hate Mordecai?
- What reason did Haman give the king for destroying all the Jews throughout the kingdom?
- How did Haman decide what day the Jews should die? What day was chosen?
- What did Mordecai do when he heard about the proclamation to kill the Jews?
- What did Mordecai ask Queen Esther to do to help her people? How did Queen Esther respond to Mordecai's request?



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Memory Challenge:

Esther 4:14

“For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”



L3L56: The Courage of a Queen

Esther 5-6

After three days of fasting, Esther prepared herself to go before the king. Even though she was the queen, it was still forbidden for anyone to stand in the king's presence without permission. Even if the king made allowance for her to come into his court without being summoned, she had to be careful how to tell him that his chief of all the king's princes was plotting to destroy her people. Esther was running out of time, for as she prepared banquets for the king, Haman was plotting his revenge against Mordecai. The king, unaware of Haman's plans, had something very different in mind for Mordecai.

Discuss:

- How do you think Esther felt before she entered the court of the king unannounced? Why did Esther decide to put her life in danger? What can we learn from Esther about courage?
- Why do you think Esther decided to have a banquet for the king and Haman? What happened at the first banquet?
- Why was Haman so angry with Mordecai? What was he planning to get revenge?
- What did Mordecai do for which the king wanted to honor him? What was Haman coming to ask the king when he asked Haman advice on how to honor Mordecai? Who did Haman think he was talking about?
- How do you think Haman felt when he had to carry out the king's orders to honor Mordecai? What are some lessons this story teaches us about pride? Why is it important to be humble?



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Memory Challenge:

Esther 5:7-8

Then Esther answered and said, "My petition and request is this: If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."



L3L53: Esther Saves Her People

Esther 7-10

Haman had built a gallows for Mordecai, but his opportunity to tell the king about the plan to use them instead turned into a conversation about how to honor Mordecai for his good deeds. Haman, humiliated from having to lead a parade of honor for his enemy Mordecai, after sulking to his wife at home, arrived at Esther's second banquet. At the banquet, King Ahaserus asked Esther what she desired, and he would give it to her – even up to half the kingdom! Haman and the king were both caught off guard by Esther's request, and a lovely banquet quickly turned into the queen's triumph and the end of a very bad day for Haman.

Discuss:

- What do you think Haman was thinking about when he came to Esther's second banquet?
- What was Esther's petition to the king? Esther had the opportunity to ask for any desire up to half of the kingdom! For what could have she asked? What can we learn about Esther from her response to the king?
- How did the king respond to Esther's request? Why do you think he reacted the way he did?
- What happened to Haman? What happened to Mordecai in the end?
- How did Haman's plan turn out for the Jews? How did the king help fix the situation for them?
- In the book of Esther, the name of God is not used at all. What things from the narrative show us that God was working with the characters throughout the story?



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Memory Challenge:

Esther 7:3

Then Queen Esther answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the King, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request."