

Lessons Learned from Esther

Introduction

- In this lesson we will note several lessons from the book of Esther.
- The aim of this lesson is to help all understand that God cares for His people and provides for them in His own way.

Esther 2:5-9

1. About the Text :

- A. The book of Esther is set in the Persian empire.
- B. The time of the book of Esther occurs between the years of 483-473 BC, some 100+ years after the Babylonian captivity.
- C. The story properly fits in between chapters 6 and 7 of the book of Nehemiah.
 - 1) After Nehemiah's return to Israel.
 - 2) Before Ezra's return to Israel.
- D. The Jewish people in the book of Esther are those who remained behind in the Persian empire while Nehemiah returned.
- E. The main characters of the book are Esther and her cousin, Mordecai, the King of Persia, Ahasuerus (Xerxes), and Haman.
- F. The purpose of the book of Esther is to explain the background and purpose to the feast of Purim (8:26-28).

- G. The key verses in the book are 4:13-14.** And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. 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?"

- H. The concept for the book is "Providence." There is no mention of God in the book of Esther at all. God worked "behind the scenes" in order to accomplish His will.**

The Story of the Book of Esther

1. Vashti's Downfall (chapter 1)

- A. The King's feast is noted by the historian Herodotus who said it was a military planning session.**

- B. The King commanded Vashti to come wearing her royal crown "to show her beauty."**

- C. Vashti refused.**

- D. The king made a proclamation that Vashti would no longer have a royal position and that wives ought to honor their husbands.**

2. Esther's Selection and Marriage (2:1-20)

- A. The King sent out officers to find women to replace Vashti.
- B. Esther was among the women selected.
- C. Mordecai sought each day to know of Esther's welfare.
- D. She prepared herself for 12 months and finally was given audience.
- E. The king loved Esther more than all the other women (2:17).
- F. Esther kept her nationality secret.

3. Mordecai's Service to the King (2:21-23)

- A. Mordecai overheard two eunuchs plotting the King's assassination.
- B. He reported it and the men were hanged.
- C. Mordecai's name was recorded in the Chronicles of the King.

4. Haman's Promotion and Plot (chapter 3)

- A. Haman was promoted and all people were to bow down to him.
- B. But Mordecai did not bow.
- C. Haman convinced the king to kill all the Jews because they spoke against him.
- D. This was to be done on the 13th day of the 12th month, Adar (March).

5. The Proclamation of Destruction (4:1-14)

- A. Mordecai learns of this proclamation and adorns himself in sackcloth and ashes.**
- B. Esther hears about this and inquires.**
- C. Mordecai warns Esther that she will not escape unless she does something.**
- D. 4:13-14** “And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: “Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. 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?”

6. Esther’s Plan Begun (4:15-5:8)

- A. Esther goes in to the king and is received favorably.**
- B. Esther invites the king of Haman to a feast.**

7. Haman’s Plan Against Mordecai (5:9-14)

- A. In Haman’s pride he boasts to his family about this feast.**
- B. The family plots Mordecai’s death by hanging – 50 cubit high gallows.**

8. The Honor of Mordecai (6:1-14)

- A. The king was sleepless and reading the records.**
- B. He came across Mordecai's service.**
- C. Desiring to honor Mordecai, the king asks Haman what should be done.**
- D. Haman, thinking that he was being honored devised an elaborate plan.**
 - 1) A royal robe.**
 - 2) A royal horse.**
 - 3) A royal crest.**
 - 4) Lead by the most noble princes.**
 - 5) Esther 6:11** So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"
- E. Haman is then humiliated in having to carry out his plan for Mordecai.**

9. Esther's Plan Completed (7:1-10)

- A. Esther reveals to the king her heritage.
- B. She tells what has been devised against her people.
- C. Esther brings the charge against Haman at the second feast.
- D. Haman is taken out and hanged (impaled) on his own gallows.

10. The Salvation of Mordecai and the Jewish People (8:1-17)

- A. Esther speaks to the king about the law.
- B. The king proclaims that the Jewish people are allowed to fight their enemies.

11. Jewish victory over their enemies (9:1-16)

- A. The Jewish people fight.
- B. Many take the side of the Jews.
- C. Many convert to Judaism.
- D. The enemies are killed.
- E. Haman's 10 sons are killed.
- F. A second day of fighting is proclaimed.

12. The celebrations of their victories (9:17-32)

- A. On the 14th day of Adar there was rest in the villages, but in Shushan the rest was not until the 15th day.
- B. Both days are thus honored in the feast of Purim.

13. Mordecai's Notoriety (10:1-3)**Lessons Learned from the Book of Esther**

- 1. God can use evil men to accomplish good things for his people.
 - A. King Ahasuerus was an evil man (1:11).
 - B. Haman was an evil man.
 - C. Ahasuerus evil ended up being Esther's salvation.
 - D. Haman's evil ended up being the Jews salvation.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

- 2. Courage is a virtue worth rewarding.
 - A. The courage of Mordecai in refusing to bow to Haman.
 - B. The courage of Esther in entering the king's presence.

2 Timothy 1:7-8 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,

3. Pride goes before destruction.

- A. Haman's pride promoted Mordecai.**
- B. Haman's pride then destroyed himself and his family.**

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

4. Anger does nothing but build our own gallows.

- A. Haman's anger drove his hatred for Mordecai.**
- B. It drove him to build the gallows prior to the king's judgment.**
- C. Then when the king learned of Haman's efforts, he was hanged on his own gallows.**

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

5. God takes care of his people.

- A. God elevated Esther to queen.**
- B. God ensured that Mordecai's loyalty was recorded.**
- C. God worked in the timing of the two feasts.**
- D. God uses Haman's gallows for his own purpose.**
- E. God uses the circumstances to bring great blessing to his people.**

Hebrews 13:5-6

Conclusion

- 1. We've reviewed the book of Esther and noted some very practical lessons.**
- 2. Let us realize that God takes care of his people and we are God's people today if we will strive do all His will.**

