



Week 1

Esther 1-2

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Day 1- Esther 1-9

Read the entire story of Esther in one sitting if possible. The parts of the story of Esther are better understood as they relate to the whole story.

Watch for two themes in the book of Esther- God's providence and the reversal of destiny.

"When we speak of God's providence, we mean that God, in some invisible and inscrutable way, governs all creatures, actions, and circumstances through the normal and the ordinary course of human life, without the intervention of the miraculous."

Karen Jobe

- Pray as you read, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you in understanding, praise, confession, thanksgiving, and petition in light of the truth you are reading.

Day 2-Esther 1

The story of Esther takes place in the land of exile, now ruled by the Medes and Persians, between the times Zerubbabel led the first and largest group of exiles back to Jerusalem and Ezra led his group of exiles back.

1. Describe King Ahasuerus (also known as Xerxes) from the information in verses 1-9.

2. Describe Queen Vashti. Speculate on why you think she refused the king's command.

3. What were the advisors to the king worried about and what did they recommend in verses 16-20?

For Discussion: What similarities do you see in the world of King Ahasuerus and in our world today? (Think culturally, politically, religiously, personally)

4. What is significant in verse 19, about the law of the Medes and Persians?

Digging Deeper: At what other time do we see the irrevocable law of the Medes and Persians come into play affecting God's people? See Daniel 6

The Hidden Hand of God- How do you see God sovereignly at work behind the scenes in the events of today's scripture reading? (Hint: Why did Vashti risk her position and power for a noble yet predictably futile gesture?)



The indulgence and extravagance of the world Esther lived in as well as the world we live in points us to our need for a Savior King. We will forever try to fill the empty places in our souls with more and more material things until we experience and live in the lavish love of God in Christ Jesus.

Jesus, the King of all Creation, stands in stark contrast to King Ahasuerus. Jesus has also invited us to a banquet, but the invitation is based on his sacrificial love and the clothing we wear is his own righteous covering. Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding banquet of the Lamb! (Rev. 19:9)

- Spend time reading and meditating on Ephesians 1:3-14. Thank God for the rich blessings he has given us through Jesus.

Day 3-Esther 2:1-11

5. What were the required qualifications of the new queen and how did she apply according to verses 1-3?

Scholar's Note: The ancient historian Josephus says that 400 girls were taken into the harem.

For Discussion: How do you think a young Jewish girl might view this "opportunity"?

6. Describe Mordecai from the information in verses 5-11.

Digging Deeper: Who is Mordecai a descendant of? (This will be significant to our story later on.) See 1 Samuel 10:20-24.

7. Describe Esther (in appearance and personality) from the information in Chapter 2.

8. Verse 9 uses the phrase "Esther won favor" with Hegai, not the more passive phrase, "found favor". What do you think is the difference? What might this reveal about Esther?

Day 4-Esther 2:9-18

9. In spite of her Jewish ancestry how did Esther manage to blend in? (vs.9-10)

10. According to verse 15, how was Esther very strategic when it came time for her to go to the king?

11. How does the king respond to Esther in verse 17?

Picture and Ponder: *“The triumph of God’s kingdom is not dependent upon the faithfulness of God’s people. Even when they think that the only way to survive is to blend in or keep quiet. God is yet able and willing to deliver.”* - Gospel Transformation Bible.

The Hidden Hand of God- How do you see God sovereignly at work in the events of today’s scripture reading?

Day 5-Esther 2:19-23

Scholar’s Note: Verse 19 states that Mordecai was sitting at the king’s gate. “This location identifies him as an official of the king, although whether he held such a position already before Esther’s rise to the throne or received it through Esther’s influence is not clear.” –Iain M. Duguid

12. Because of his position at the king’s gate, what did Mordecai discover?

13. What kind of influence did Mordecai have in Esther's life according to verses 20 and 22?

14. In verse 23, what two outcomes resulted from Mordecai's loyalty to the king? What other outcome would you have expected?



Mordecai probably expected to be rewarded for his loyalty. In his commentary on Esther, Duguid tells us, "in general, the Persian kings were extremely diligent and generous in rewarding those who had served well. They kept careful lists of benefactors so that they could be rewarded." And though Mordecai's good deed was recorded in the king's records, his reward was neglected.

Unlike Mordecai at that time, we have the advantage of knowing the end of the story. We know God is waiting for the perfect moment to reveal Mordecai's allegiance, sovereignly bringing his perfect plan together for the best possible outcome.

Maybe God seems absent in the circumstances of your life as you wait for...
good health to return,
a relationship to be reconciled,
a baby to be conceived,
relief from pain,
a child or spouse to follow Jesus,
a burden to be lifted...

Be assured that though God seems absent, he surely is not, as we see in the lives of Mordecai and Esther. We only have our very limited knowledge and tiny perspective, but God knows all the details; he sees all of eternity past and present at once. He is not arbitrarily causing you to wait, but he has a plan and a purpose that he is bringing about for your good and his glory.

And therefore the Lord [earnestly] waits [expecting, looking, and longing] to be gracious to you; and therefore He lifts Himself up, that He may have mercy on you and show loving-kindness to you. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) are all those who [earnestly] wait for Him, who

expect and look and long for Him [for His victory, His favor, His love, His peace, His joy, and His matchless, unbroken companionship]! Isaiah 30:18 AMPC

- Spend time reading and meditating on John 14:16-17, Romans 11:33-36, praying through these verses in faith, letting them remind us that we are not alone and that though we cannot understand God's ways, he is sovereign and full of wisdom.

The Hidden Hand of God- How do you see God sovereignly at work in the events of today's scripture reading?

One Thing: Look back over this week's study. Pick one thing that God impressed on you, convicted you about, or something new that you learned and write it here.

How will knowing this impact the way you think and act?