

Destin Church of Christ

August 6, 2023

Chapter 20: The Queen of Beauty and Courage

Esther 1 – 9

Introduction:

This week, we will learn how Esther and her people faced a horrific threat in a foreign land. Despite the seeming absence of God, he is everywhere, in both Esther's story, and in our story today.

Lesson Breakdown:

- Finding a Queen (Esther 1-2)
- Two King's Men (Esther 2-4)
- A Risky Move (Esther 5)
- Skewered (Esther 6-7)
- Tables Turned (Esther 8-10)

Plot Points:

- While Esther and Mordecai are God's key players, it is God himself who stands out as the sovereign hero in this story.
- In Esther's example, we see that God calls his people fearlessly to risk all for what is right.
- In Haman's demise, we see a perfect illustration of an eternal truth: truth goes before a fall.

As you watch the video for Session 20 of The Story, notice some of the main points.

- ✓ Haman loathes Mordecai.
- ✓ In the Lower Story, the dice did not fall in Israel's favor.
- ✓ "And who knows but that you have come to this royal position for such a time as this?"
- ✓ The pole that was meant for Mordecai was now used on Haman.
- ✓ People roll the dice, but God determines how the dice will fall.

UNDERSTAND THE STORY:

➤ Esther 1:

Xerxes, a.k.a. Ahasuerus rules over 127 provinces of the upper Nile region, from India to Cush Persia. (275) [Esther 1:1-2]

He holds a lavishly described feast which lasts for 180 days. (275) [Esther 1:3-4]

Queen Vashti holds a feast for the women at the same time. (276) [Esther 1:9]

Being in “high spirits from wine”, Xerxes demands that Vashti come and show off her beauty to his guests. (276) [Esther 1:10-11]

Queen Vashti refuses, making Xerxes angry. (276) [Esther 1:12]

The king’s counsellors express concern that Vashti’s insubordination will set a bad precedent for wives everywhere. (276) [Esther 1:16-18]

They advise that she be replaced, so the message is sent out across the land. (276) [Esther 1:19-22]

➤ Esther 2:

Xerxes’ personal attendants propose to the king to bring in all the beautiful young women and let the one who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti. (277) [Esther 2:1-4]

Esther is prepared and presented to the king. (277-278) [Esther 2:5-9]

1. What is Esther’s Jewish name? (278) [Esther 2:7]

2. What nationality is the name “Esther”?

She conceals her Jewish identity. (278) [Esther 2:10]

Every day, Mordecai checks to find out what was happening to her. (278) [Esther 2:11]

3. How long did it take for these young women to present themselves to the king? (278) [Esther 2:12]

Esther is chosen and made queen. (278-279) [Esther 2:17]

The king gives a great banquet and proclaims a holiday throughout the provinces. (279) [Esther 2:18]

Mordecai saves Xerxes' life by revealing a conspiracy against him by two of his eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh. (279) [Esther 2:21-23]

➤ Esther 3:

Haman, a noble in the king’s court, is promoted, and gains respect. (279) [Esther 3:1]

All the king’s servants who *were* within the king’s gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, but Mordecai did not. (279) [Esther 3:2]

Haman becomes angry, and seeks to kill not only Mordecai, but all Jews. (280) [Esther 3:5-6]

Haman obtains permission from the king to issue a decree to kill all Jews, on the pretext that they separated themselves from the rest of the land and did not observe the king's laws. (280) [Esther 3:8-9]

The date of the killing is set for the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. Letters were sent to every province, telling the people they should be ready for that day. (280-281) [Esther 3:13-14]

➤ Esther 4:

Mordecai, after learning about the decree, tears his clothes and mourns with sackcloth and ashes. (281) [Esther 4:1-2]

Mordecai informs Esther of the law and advises her to speak with the king. (281) [Esther 4:6-9]

Esther resolves to do so, despite the fact that she risks death for approaching the king uninvited. (She has been called to the king for thirty days.) (281) [Esther 4:10-14]

Esther tells Mordecai to gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan (*Susa*) and fast. The Jews fast for three days. (281) [Esther 4:15-17]

➤ Esther 5:

Esther visits the king. He welcomes her and holds out his scepter to her. (282) [Esther 5:1-2]

4. What did it indicate by the king holding out his scepter to her?

Esther invites the king and Haman to a feast. (282) [Esther 5:4]

At the feast, Esther asks that the king and Haman come to another feast on the following day. (282) [Esther 5:6]

Haman is still frustrated by Mordecai's continued refusal to bow before him, so his wife Zeresh advises him to have a pole built, and to request the king at the banquet to have Mordecai hung. (282) [Esther 5:14]

➤ Esther 6:

One night, not able to sleep, the king asks the chronicles to be read to him. He discovers that Mordecai was never rewarded for saving his life. (283) [Esther 6:1-3]

Xerxes ask Haman what should be done for Mordecai. Haman recommends he be given a royal robe and a horse and paraded on horseback through the city square.

(284) [Esther 6:6-9]

The king asks Haman to lead the parade of honor for Mordecai. (284) [Esther 6:10]

Haman is warned by his wife of Mordecai's rising status, and hurries to the banquet Esther had prepared. (284) [Esther 6:12-14]

➤ Esther 7:

At the banquet, Xerxes asks Esther of her request. Esther begs that her life, and the lives of the Jews may be spared. (284-285) [Esther 7:1-4]

The king asks who wants to do such a thing. Esther said it was Haman.

(285) [Esther 7:5-6]

The king becomes angry and leaves the room. Haman pleads for his life before the queen.

(285) [Esther 7:7]

When the king reenters, Haman trips onto Esther's couch, so the king thinks he is assaulting her. (285) [Esther 7:8]

Haman is hung on the very pole that he made for Mordecai. (285) [Esther 7:9-10]

➤ Esther 8:

Esther is given Haman's property. Mordecai is given the king's signet ring and was appointed over the house of Haman. (285) [Esther 8:1-2]

Esther begs the king to save the Jews. (286) [Esther 8:3-10]

Xerxes tells Esther to write the decree and seal it with the king's signet ring.

(286) [Esther 8:7-8]

A counter-decree is issued allowing the Jews, on the day they were scheduled for annihilation, be able to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, *both* little children and women, and to plunder their possessions.

(286-287) [Esther 8:11-14]

When the Jews hear the news, they rejoice. (287) [Esther 8:15-16]

Many in the land of other nationalities become Jews, because fear of the Jews fell on them. (287) [Esther 8:17]

➤ Esther 9:

The day comes and the Jews defeated all their enemies with the stroke of the sword and did what they pleased with those who hated them. (287) [Esther 9:5]

They killed 500 men in Shushan and the 10 sons of Haman. They did not take any plunder. (287) [Esther 9:5]

Esther asks Xerxes for permission to repeat it the next day and hang Haman's sons. The king agrees. (288) [Esther 9:13-14]

The next day, they kill 300 men at Shushan and 75,000 in other provinces. Again, they did not plunder. (288) [Esther 9:15-16]

(NIB) [Esther 9:18-19]

Jews celebrate victory, and Purim is declared by Mordecai as an annual festival for all Jews, and it's still celebrated today. (288) [Esther 9:20-25]

5. When was the "Festival of Purim" celebrated? (288) [Esther 9:21]

'Purim' is derived from 'pur' meaning 'lots' and refers to the lottery that Haman used to choose the date for the massacre. (288) [Esther 9:26-28]

6. Could Mordecai have been the writer of the book of Esther? (NIB) [Esther 9:29]

(NIB) [Esther 9:30-32]

➤ Esther 10:

Xerxes' empire is strong. Mordecai is a popular and powerful ruler under Xerxes, and his story is recorded in official records. (NIB) [Esther 10:1-3]

7. Is chapter 10, verse 3, the end of the book of Esther?

Even though the name of God is never used in the Bible book of Esther, we discover that God is on every page, at work each moment, and present at all times. God is near, present, and working ... even when we can't see him.

Next week we'll look at chapter 21, the story of Nehemiah and how God brings his people to rebuild the walls of the great city of Jerusalem.

Ezra 7; Nehemiah 1 – 2; 4; 6 – 8; Malachi 1 – 4