



# *Esther*

*The Chosen*

*Queen*

*Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger*

## Overview

### **ESTHER BECOMES THE QUEEN TO SAVE HER PEOPLE**

Esther's story is told in the book of Esther. We treasure security, even though we know that security in this life carries no guarantees— possessions can be destroyed, beauty fades, relationships can be broken, death is inevitable.

Real security, then, must be found beyond this life. Only when our security rests on God and his unchanging nature can we face the challenges that life is sure to bring our way.

Esther's beauty and character won Xerxes' heart, and he made her his queen. Even in her favored position, however, she would risk her life by attempting to see the king when he had not requested her presence.

There was no guarantee that the king would even see her. Although she was queen, she was still not secure. But, cautiously and courageously, Esther decided to risk her life by approaching the king on behalf of her people. She made her plans carefully.

The Jews were asked to fast and pray with her before she went to the king. Then on the chosen day she went before him, and he did ask her to come forward and speak. But instead of issuing her request directly, she invited him and Haman to a banquet.

He was astute enough to realize she had something on her mind, yet she conveyed the importance of the matter by insisting on a second banquet. In the meantime, God was working behind the scenes.

He caused Xerxes to read the historical records of the kingdom late one night, and the king discovered that Mordecai had once saved his life.

Xerxes lost no time in honoring Mordecai for that act. During the second banquet, Esther told the king of Haman's plot against the Jews, and Haman was doomed. There is grim justice in Haman's death on the gallows he had built for Mordecai, and it seems fitting that the day on which the Jews were to be slaughtered became the day their enemies died.

## **Also called HADASSAH**

### **Esther Chosen Queen**

#### **Niece of Mordecai**

#### **Esther 2:7**

And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

Mordecai was a Jew. The Jewish population had increased since their exile over 100 years earlier. They had been given great freedom and were allowed to run their own businesses and hold positions in government (Esther 2:19; Daniel 6:3).

The Bible says that Mordecai was carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. If this referred to Mordecai himself, he would have been over 100 years old at the time of this story. This difficult phrase can be resolved by understanding that the word “who,” referring to Mordecai, can also mean “whose family.” It is likely that Mordecai’s great-grandparents were carried into captivity rather than Mordecai himself.

#### **Esther 2:15**

Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed.

And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.

With virtually no rights and little access to the king, it was better for Esther not to reveal her identity. While boldness in stating our identity as God’s people is our responsibility, at times a good strategy is to keep quiet until we have won the right to be heard. This is especially true when dealing with those in authority over us. But we can always let them see the difference God makes in our lives.

Persian kings collected not only vast amounts of jewelry, but also great numbers of women. These young virgins were taken from their homes and were required to live in a separate building near the palace, called a harem.

Their sole purpose was to serve the king and to await his call for sexual pleasure. They rarely saw the king, and their lives were restricted and boring. If rejected, Esther would be one of many girls the king had seen once and forgotten. But Esther's presence and beauty pleased the king enough that he crowned her queen in place of Vashti.

The queen held a more influential position than a concubine, and she was given more freedom and authority than others in the harem. But even as queen, Esther had few rights—especially because she had been chosen to replace a woman who had become too assertive.

God placed Esther on the throne even before the Jews faced the possibility of complete destruction (Esther 3:5ff), so that when trouble came, a person would already be in the position to help. No human effort could thwart God's plan to send the Messiah to earth as a Jew.

If you are changing jobs, position, or location and can't see God's purpose in your situation, understand that God is in control. He may be placing you in a position so you can help when the need arises.

### **Esther 2:17**

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

## **Intercedes for her people**

### **Esther 4**

And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name.

Esther risked her life by coming before the king. Her courageous act gives us a model to follow in approaching a difficult or dangerous task. Like Esther, we can:

- (1) Calculate the cost. Esther realized her life was at stake.
- (2) Set priorities. She believed that the safety of the Jewish race was more important than her life.
- (3) Prepare. She gathered support and fasted.
- (4) Determine a course of action and move ahead boldly. She didn't think too long about it, allowing the interlude to lessen her commitment to what she had to do.

Do you have to face a hostile audience, confront a friend on a delicate subject, or talk to your family about changes to be made? Rather than dreading difficult situations or putting them off, take action with confidence by following Esther's inspiring example.

### **Esther 5**

Hatred and bitterness are like weeds with long roots that grow in the heart and corrupt all of life. Haman was so consumed with hatred toward Mordecai that he could not even enjoy the honor of being invited to Esther's party.

Hebrews 12:15 warns us to watch out "that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

Don't let hatred and its resulting bitterness build in your heart. Like Haman, you will find it backfiring against you (see Esther 6:13; Esther 7:9-

If the mere mention of someone's name provokes you to anger, confess your bitterness as sin. Ignoring bitterness, hiding it from others, or making superficial changes in behavior is not enough. If bitterness isn't completely removed, it will grow back, making matters worse.

Haman's family and friends, who were as arrogant as he, suggested that the gallows be 75 feet high, probably built on the city wall or some prominent building.

They wanted to make sure that all the people of the city saw Mordecai's death and would be reminded of the consequences of disobeying Haman. Ironically, these high gallows allowed everyone to see Haman's death.

## **Esther 6**

Unable to sleep, the king decided to review the history of his reign, and his servants read to him about Mordecai's good deed.

This seems coincidental, but God is *always* at work. God has been working quietly and patiently throughout your life as well. The events that have come together for good are not mere coincidence; they are the result of God's sovereign control over the course of people's lives (Romans 8:28).

Haman had wealth, but he craved something even his money couldn't buy—respect. He could buy the trappings of success and power, but his lust for popularity had become an obsession. Don't let your desire for approval, applause, and popularity drive you to immoral action

Mordecai had exposed a plot to assassinate Xerxes—thus he had saved the king's life (Esther 2:21-23). Although his good deed was recorded in the history books, Mordecai had gone unrewarded. But God was saving Mordecai's reward for the right time. Just as Haman was about to hang Mordecai unjustly, the king was ready to give the reward. Although God promises to reward our good deeds, we sometimes feel our "payoff" is too far away. Be patient. God steps in when it will do the most good.

## **Esther 7**

Haman's hatred and evil plotting turned against him when the king discovered his true intentions. He was hanged on the gallows he had built for someone else. Proverbs 26:27 teaches that a person who digs a pit for others will fall into it himself. What happened to Haman shows the often violent results of setting any kind of trap for others.

“They covered Haman's face.” A veil was placed over the face of someone condemned to death because Persian kings refused to look upon the face of a condemned person.

## **Esther 8**

While we should not expect earthly rewards for being faithful to God, they often come. Esther and Mordecai were faithful, even to the point of risking their lives to save others. When they were willing to give up everything, God gave them a reward in proportion to their all-out commitment.

Haman's message had been sealed with the king's signet ring and could not be reversed, even by the king. It was part of the famed “law of the Medes and Persians.” Now the king gave permission for whatever other decree Mordecai could devise that would offset the first, without actually canceling it.

Everyone wants to be a hero and receive praise, honor, and wealth. But few are willing to pay the price. Mordecai served the government faithfully for years, bore Haman's hatred and oppression, and risked his life for his people. The price to be paid by God's heroes is long-term commitment. Are you ready and willing to pay the price?

## Esther 9

Haman had decreed that on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month anyone could kill the Jews and take their property. Mordecai's decree could not reverse Haman's because no law signed by the king could be repealed. Instead, Mordecai had the king sign a new law giving Jews the right to fight back.

When the dreaded day arrived, there was much fighting, but the Jews killed only those who wanted to kill them, and they did not take their enemies' possessions, even though they could have (Esther 8:11; Esther 9:10, 16).

There were no additional riots after the two-day slaughter, so obviously selfish gain or revenge were not primary motives of the Jews. They simply wanted to defend themselves and their families from those who hated them.

Here the word "citadel" seems to refer to the fortified city of Susa. The king appears to be more concerned about Esther's wishes than the slaughter of his subjects.

People tend to have short memories when it comes to God's faithfulness. To help counter this, Mordecai wrote down these events and encouraged an annual holiday to commemorate the historic days of Purim. Jews still celebrate Purim today.

Celebrations of feasting, gladness, and gift-giving are important ways to remember God's specific acts. Today the festivities of Christmas and Easter help us remember the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Don't let the celebration or the exchanging of gifts hide the meaning of these great events.

Among Jews, women were expected to be quiet, to serve in the home, and to stay on the fringe of religious and political life.

Esther was a Jewish woman who broke through the cultural norms, stepping outside her expected role to risk her life to help God's people. Whatever your place in life, God can use you. Be open, available, and ready because God may use you to do what others are afraid even to consider.

## Life Application

Esther's risk confirmed that God was the source of her security.

How much of your security lies in your possessions, position, or reputation?

God has not placed you in your present position for your own benefit. He put you there to serve him.

As in Esther's case, this may involve risking your security.

Are you willing to let God be your ultimate security?

### Key verse:

“Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day.

I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16).

### To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House  
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