



ESTHER

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

STUDY GUIDE

WEEK 2

Welcome back to Week Two of Esther! I hope you viewed the Teaching Video for Week 1 already, if not go ahead and do that now. In last week's study, we saw Queen Vashti dethroned, and a few years later, Esther, an obscure, humble, Jewish woman from the city of Shushan was chosen to be the new Queen. She was crowned, and the King held "The Feast of Esther!" Things happen fast in Persia, so don't blink. At the very end of chapter two, there was a plot to assassinate King Ahasuerus that was discovered by Mordecai. Another act of God's providence. And now, this story is about to take an interesting turn. Let's jump in!

CHAPTER 3 - THE VILLAIN'S PLOT

We're about to meet an instrumental figure in chapter 3, but don't get your hopes up. He's not the kind of guy you want to have around, unless you're the King of Persia. Yes, for some reason, this guy seems to be his new favorite.

Read Esther 3:1-6.

1. Write out the first 3 words of chapter three, and to what events does this phrase refer?
2. Who did the King promote and what was his new position? (vs. 1)
3. What did the King command in verse 2?
4. What did Mordecai refuse to do? (vs. 2)

KEY VERSE 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?"



5. What explanation did Mordecai give to his coworkers when they pressed him for an answer? (vs. 4)

6. Why do you think Mordecai didn't bow? Do you feel he was right or wrong, and why? Please use Scripture to support your answer.

7. What did Mordecai's coworkers do because of his actions? (vs. 4)

8. How did Haman respond? (vs. 5)

9. Anger turned to rage, and it wasn't enough for Haman to punish Mordecai alone. Whom did he want to destroy? (vs. 6)

THE KING'S GATE

Mordecai held a government position at the King's Gate, although it's unknown what his exact occupation or rank was. We do know those who served at the King's Gate were considered "servants of the king" (see verse 2).

Read Esther 3:7-15.

10. How did Haman determine the day he hoped to kill and annihilate the Jews? (vs. 7)

11. How did Haman present his plan to the King? (vs. 8-9)

12. What would Haman give to the royal treasuries? (vs. 9)

13. How did the King give his authorization? (vs. 10-11)

14. How was the news of this law dispersed? (vs. 12-15)

15. What did King Ahasuerus and Haman do next? (vs. 15)

16. Put the last sentence of chapter three in your own words:

SIGNET RING

A finger ring containing a small seal, one's initial, or the like.

“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.”
- Proverbs 15:3

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

1. In Chapter 2, Mordecai saved the King's life by reporting a plot to kill him, yet in Chapter 3, Haman received the promotion. Mordecai's good deed seemed to be overlooked and unrewarded. Even though it was recorded in the King's Annals, Mordecai never received as much as a simple "thank you" from the King. Have you ever felt overlooked, or that the good you've done has gone unnoticed? If so, write about it below.
2. The Bible teaches us in Proverbs 15:3 that God's eyes see all, both the evil and the good. And the Lord is the rewarder and the promoter. He will recognize us when the time is right. Look up Matthew 6:1-4. What does this passage teach us about doing good in secret?"

3. Can you think of some other godly people in Scripture that were overlooked instead of being promoted? If so, List out their names and Scripture references below.

4. Mordecai stood up instead of bowing down, even in the face of his coworkers hounding him every day. Do you have a situation in your life in which God is calling you to stand up for what you believe is right? If so, share it below. Consider what steps you will need to take to follow God's leading.

5. What do you think would have happened if Mordecai had not spoken up? How would that have affected the outcome of the story of Esther?

CHAPTER 4 - THE QUEEN'S COURAGE

Read Esther 4:1-8.

1. When Mordecai learned of Haman's plot against the Jews, what did he do? (vs. 1)

2. What did he wear and what did wearing this show? (vs. 1)

3. Mordecai was not the only one who mourned this way. How did the Jews throughout the kingdom respond? (vs. 3)

4. How did Esther hear about Mordecai weeping and mourning at the King's Gate? (vs. 4)

5. How did she try to comfort Mordecai? (vs. 4)

6. Whom did Esther send to find out the reason for Mordecai's sorrow? (vs. 5)

7. What did Hathach find out from Mordecai, to relay to Esther? (vs. 7-8)

8. At the end of verse 8, what did Mordecai want Esther to do?

SACKCLOTH & ASHES

Sackcloth and ashes were used in Old Testament times as a symbol of debasement, mourning, and/or repentance. Someone wanting to show his repentant heart would often wear sackcloth, sit in ashes, and put ashes on top of his head. Sackcloth was a coarse material usually made of black goat's hair, making it quite uncomfortable to wear. The ashes signified desolation and ruin.

When someone died, the act of putting on sackcloth showed heartfelt sorrow for the loss of that person. We see an example of this when David mourned the death of Abner, the commander of Saul's army (2 Samuel 3:31). Jacob also demonstrated his grief by wearing sackcloth when he thought his son Joseph had been killed (Genesis 37:34). These instances of mourning for the dead mention sackcloth but not ashes.

Ashes accompanied sackcloth in times of national disaster or repenting from sin. Esther 4:1, for instance, describes Mordecai tearing his clothes, putting on sackcloth and ashes, and walking out into the city "wailing loudly and bitterly." This was Mordecai's reaction to King Xerxes' declaration giving the wicked Haman authority to destroy the Jews (see Esther 3:8-15). Mordecai was not the only one who grieved. "In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes" (Esther 4:3). The Jews responded to the devastating news concerning their race with sackcloth and ashes, showing their intense grief and distress.

-gotquestions.org

Read Esther 4:9-17.

9. Why was Esther hesitant to go before the King? (vs. 11)

10. What would the King hold out in order to show that whoever came before him was safe? (vs. 11)

11. How long had it been since the King had called for Esther? (vs. 11)

12. How did Mordecai answer Esther? (vs. 13-14)

13. Write out the last phrase of verse 14.

14. Sum up what Mordecai was saying to Esther in verse 14 your own words.

15. Mordecai saw God's hand in Esther becoming Queen, and he realized that this might be the very purpose for why she was elevated to this position. This revelation seemed to move Esther into action. What did she instruct Mordecai to do? (vs. 16)

16. What was she resolved to do? (vs. 16)

17. Mordecai left to follow her instructions, but Esther walked back into the palace. What do you think was going through Esther's mind at that moment?

PERSONAL REFLECTION-

1. Mordecai showed his sorrow and grief over the decree to kill the Jewish people. He wept, put on sackcloth and ashes, and made his feelings known to Esther. With the recent pandemic in our world, what emotions are you feeling right now? How do you need God's help? Who do you need to share your feelings with?

2. Have you ever prayed and fasted for something? If so, share it below.

3. Even though Esther lived within the palace and wore the crown of the Queen, she was unaware of this law until Mordecai informed her. We can see that she had little access to the world outside the walls of the palace, due to her having to send a Messenger to Mordecai. Esther must have felt that her hands were tied and she had no control. Are you feeling like that?

6. God's plans for your life are always about so much more than just your life. Like Esther, how do you see God drawing you into His story and purpose for the ages? How does he want to include you in His eternal plan?

THE BIBLE IS THE STORY OF GOD

The Bible is a story about God, His love, His redemptive purposes for humankind, and how He reveals Himself to His creation. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is telling us about the reign and rule of God.

THE BIG STORY - We're studying Esther, but really we're studying God. Looking at the "Big Story" means we are recognizing that God is the central person in the entire Bible. Everything is about Him. What did you learn about God in this story? What do these Scriptures teach you about the God we serve, His heart for His people, His nature, and His character? Pray and ask God to help you see Him in the storyline, and capture your thoughts below.

THE LITTLE STORY - The Story of Esther is a smaller story within the Big Story of God. We can take an imaginary magnifying glass, and peer down throughout history to focus in on her life. As we're studying the Scriptures, what can we learn from Esther's character, faith in God, and examples? Or, what can we learn from other characters in this story?

LIFE APPLICATION -

What can you apply to your life from these chapters?

PROVIDENCE

[God's Unseen Hand
directing and guiding
all human history.]

In what ways do you
see God's Hand of
PROVIDENCE
in these chapters?

**PERSONAL PRAYER-**

Dear God,

I thank You for the story of Esther, and I thank You for the eternal purposes you have called me into. Help me to see that my life is about more than my life. Open my eyes to the truth that even in the day to day happenings and mundane moments, You are ever present, working, loving me and shaping me into the woman You want me to be. Give me peace in the storm we are in now, Your true peace. Help me to have the resolve to know You and follow Your will. In the name of JESUS CHRIST, Amen!

I PRAYED THIS PRAYER ON _____.