

Esther - Lesson Two

With the commotion of chapter one beginning to die down, the king realizes the impact of his reckless decision. Again following the advice of his aides he sponsors Persia's first beauty pageant, to which Esther becomes a prime candidate. While most people might think these are random circumstances God's word tells us there is a divine purpose woven through the details of our lives. God sees the beginning to the end, and He has a plan for each of His children and is working to fulfill that plan in the midst of daily events of life.



The Pencil Sketch

Read Esther chapters 2-3.

1. As you read these chapters, jot down any detail that reveals God's control over this situation.
 - a. From your understanding of the character of God, does He work solely in the lives and events of Christians, or is He also active in the secular world to accomplish His purposes?
 - b. Does this encourage you as you consider our current world and national situation?
 - c. Can you think of any other biblical example that began very commonplace but had spectacular endings?



Shades of Character

Beauty and the Beast

Read Esther 2:1-11

2. As you continue in this story, do you think Ahasuerus' thoughts about Vashti included his wrong treatment of her?

3. Esther has been ushered into a place she didn't expect or anticipate. Yet she seems to accept her plight. How can you determine when to accept or try to change troublesome circumstances?
 - a. What are some qualities Esther exhibits in this unpleasant situation that you can use in difficult situations of life?
 - b. How can un-chosen circumstances help to shape your life and usefulness to God?

*"Often His call is to follow in paths
we would not have chosen."*

Amy Carmichael



Personally Tailored

Think of a woman you admire in Scripture or Church history. Write out the spiritual qualities she possesses. Make a brief character summary of this woman. Now, take this list and use it as a personal prayer list for yourself this week.

4. Write out what you know about a harem.



Personally Tailored

Esther had a wonderful advisor in Mordecai; he spoke the truth and encouraged her to live in a righteous way. Hegai also gave her good advice as she found herself thrown into a worldly situation. God brought these people into Esther's life providentially to advance His purpose. As you think of your own life, look over the following list and see if you find God-provided advisors in your life.

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Admonishers | Those who warn you when you are veering of track. |
| Encouragers | Those who strengthen you spiritually and keep you moving forward. |
| Intercessors | Those who pray with you and for you. |
| Mentors | Those who set a path for you to follow. |
| Counselors | Those who assist you through personal difficulties with spiritual and biblical direction. |

6. How do you evaluate the counsel/advise of people around you?
 - a. What do you use to accept or disregard advice given?
 - b. Is there advice you've taken that should have been avoided?
 - c. Is there advice you rejected, that now, you would have followed wholeheartedly?

*" No one has any right to counsel others
who is not ready to hear and follow
the counsel of the Lord "*

AW Tozer

Baths, Balms and Blessings

Read Esther 2:12-20

7. Every culture has their definition of beauty. Who or what sets the standard for beauty or success in your world?

8. Imagine being pampered, manicured, soaked and spa-ed for twelve months! Not to mention your own staff of professional cosmetologists serving you ...with one goal in mind: to make you more appealing than the other women.
 - a. What are some of the temptations you might face in a similar situation?

 - b. How did Esther handle that kind of temptation?

 - c. What kind of beauty treatments are you giving yourself as you prepare to meet your KING?

9. What strokes of God's hand do you see in these verses?

10. How do you think Esther and Mordecai must have felt when they learned that she was the king's favorite?
11. Do you think it was just her physical beauty that caused the king to be attracted to her more than the other women? Why or why not?
12. How did Ahasuerus celebrate his new queen?

Baffled Plan

Read Esther 2:21-23

13. Like a story within a story, verses 21-23 reveal a plot within the palace. How did this plot come to light?
- a. What was the result?
14. What seemingly insignificant detail was mentioned in verse 23?
- a. Why do you think this detail is mentioned here?

Beguiling a Monarch

Read Esther 3:1-9

With two people strategically placed in positions within the palace the plot now thickens as the villain of the story becomes known

15. Who was Haman and what was his position?
 - a. Read Exodus 17:8, 13-16; Deuteronomy 25:17-19; and 1 Samuel 15:2-9. Try to summarize Agag and the Amalekites.

16. What were the king's servants commanded to do concerning Haman?
 - a. How did Mordecai respond?

 - b. What was Haman's reaction to Mordecai's behavior? (verse 5)

 - c. Can you relate to Mordecai, how do you respond to the Haman-type people in your life?

 - d. Read Proverbs 16:18. In what way does Haman's life illustrate this verse?



Personally Tailored

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you were tempted to compromise your beliefs? To cave in to pressure and participate in something that you knew was not pleasing to God? What happened? What kind of influence did your decision have on others? Can you find a verse in Scripture to help you stand strong in the face of temptation? Write it out here and commit it to memory this week.

17. How did Haman convince the king his plan was needed?

18. In what way does the response of Ahasuerus once again reveal his character?

Bewildered City

Read Esther 3:10-15

As soon as Mordecai revealed he was a Jew, he and his fellow Jews were put into a dangerous position.

19. How far did Haman's decree extend?
 - a. What was particularly cruel about the king's edict to kill the Jews?

b. How would you describe the response of the people in the city?

20. The end of the chapter states that the city was “perplexed” or “in confusion”. What were Haman and Ahasuerus doing at this time?

21. Have you ever felt that the world was in a state of confusion while those in positions of leadership and power seem to be oblivious? List some circumstances in the world today that seem to be out of God’s control, and spend time in prayer for God’s glory and will to be seen in our government and leaders.

With a copy of the written death warrant now issued in every province, the tension is mounting in the city and in the palace. Esther’s time to rise is coming!

