

# **The Book of Esther**

## **Lesson 4**

In lesson three, the last of the five main characteristics of the Book of Esther is introduced to us. He is Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite. As we saw, King Xerxes promoted Haman to a seat of honor higher than all the other nobles in his kingdom and ordered that all the officials and nobles at his gate to bow down in subjection to Haman. Mordecai, however, refuses to bow, citing the fact that he is a Jew. His refusal infuriates Haman, who plots to not only destroy Mordecai but all the Jews in the kingdom, thus continuing the centuries old conflict between God's people, represented by Jacob and his descendants, and those outside the line of promise, represented by Esau and his descendants. As we learned, sin has consequences and to obey is better than sacrifice.

We also learned the casting of the pur (lot) and how it was used to determine the date upon which all the Jews were to be annihilated. We saw that "the lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" (Proverbs 16:33). To confirm this principle, we examined some additional passages in the Bible that focused on the casting of lots and how the decisions of the lot were indeed from the Lord.

In this lesson, we will see Mordecai at his best as he persuades Queen Esther to help thwart Haman's evil plot against the Jews. Risking her life, Queen Esther displays great personal courage and wisdom as the story continues to escalate to a suspenseful, ironic climax.

As you begin the lesson, please take a moment to pray and ask God for help providing you wisdom, discernment, knowledge and joy in understanding and applying His Word.

## **Mordecai Persuades Esther to Help**

1. Read Esther 3:12-4:17. Haman's orders, written in the name of King Xerxes, had quite an effect on a number of people. Note below the reaction of:
  - A. Haman and the King.
  - B. The people in the capital city of Susa.
  - C. Mordecai.
  - D. The Jews.
  - E. Esther.
  
2. Read Esther 4:1-3 again.
  - A. Use a dictionary to define *mourning*.
  - B. Why were the Jews and Mordecai mourning?
  - C. How did they display their grief?

D. How do people in your country often display their grief during times of mourning?

3. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-3. What does this passage say about mourning?

4. From Matthew 5:4, what does Jesus say about those who mourn?

5. The Scriptures contain a number of promises of God to His people. What do the following verses affirm about these promises for those who mourn?

A. Isaiah 61:1-3

B. Jeremiah 31:10-13

C. Revelation 21:1-5

6. Read Romans 12:15.
  - A. By the way of application, what does this verse teach that we are to do regarding those who mourn?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - B. From examples of the Bible and/or from your experience, how can we best do this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - C. How have you been comforted during times of mourning?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Read Esther 4:4-9. What does Mordecai recommend to Esther in order to counter the plan Haman has hatched to annihilate the Jews?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. From verses 10 and 11, what is Esther's response to Mordecai?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Read Esther 4:12-17.
  - A. What in turn is Mordecai's reply to Esther?

B. How does his answer:

- (1) Challenge Esther?
- (2) Inspire and motivate Esther?
- (3) Reveal his belief and trust in the sovereignty of God?

C. How does Esther's reply:

- (1) Instruct Mordecai?
- (2) Reveal her courage?
- (3) Exhibit her belief and trust in the sovereignty of God?

D. What is Mordecai's response to Esther?

10. Read Ephesians 5:21. How does the relationship between Mordecai and Esther reflect the essence of this principle, especially as it relates to their unstated but clearly implied trust in the sovereignty of God?