

The Book of Esther

Lesson 6

In the last lesson, we discovered that Queen Esther and Mordecai were facing the biggest crises of their lives as the wicked Haman was preparing to annihilate all their people—the Jews young and old, men, women and children—in a single day. As in other times of pressure and high stress, the people of God turned to Him in an attitude of humility, accompanied by prayer and fasting, in order to make their appeal for mercy and deliverance.

In Psalm 145:18, we learn that the Lord is near to all those that call upon Him in truth. From James 1:5, we are encouraged to ask the Lord for wisdom, and in Psalm 37:5-7 we are told to commit our way to the Lord and to trust Him. Psalm 62 advises us to pour out our hearts to God and to wait upon Him, for our hope and expectation is from Him alone.

We also noted the dangers of pride. Haman's arrogant attitude and wicked actions remind us that "pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

In marked contrast to the attitude and actions of Haman, the apostle Paul exhorts: "Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to your own interest but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under earth, and every tongue

confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”
(Philippians 2:5-11).

As you study the last chapters of Esther in this lesson, may you have an open mind and teachable spirit, so that you might grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Haman Hanged

1. Read Esther 7:1-8:2. Once again the King invites Esther to make known her petition and request, for he is willing to meet her needs.
 - A. From verse 3, with what words and strategy does Queen Esther preface her remarks?
 - B. Do you agree with her approach?
 - C. What is her petition?
 - D. What is her request?
 - E. From verse 4, what is the rationale Esther uses in making her appeal to the King? What is her meaning? (See Amos 2:6.)

5. Read Esther 8:3-9:4.

A. From verses 3-6, what further appeal does Esther make to the King?

B. From Daniel 6:8 and 12 and Esther 1:19 and 3:12, why is this request not certain to be granted by the King?

C. From verses 7 and 8:

(1) How does the King show support for Queen Esther and Mordecai?

(2) What is his solution for solving their dilemma?

(3) How did many other nationalities react to the King's edict? Why?

(4) From Joshua 2, describe the circumstances in which great fear fell upon the enemies of the Jews.

- (5) Esther 8:17, 9:2-3, Joshua 2 and Exodus 14:10-14 and 21-25 all note that great fear fell upon the enemies of the Jews. What is the real reason they should be fearful?

The Triumph of the Jews

6. Read Esther 9-10:3.
- A. How were the tables turned in favor of the Jews?

 - B. From verse 7, what happened to the ten sons of Haman? From verses 13-14, what further indignity did they suffer?

 - C. Even though they had a legal right to protect themselves according to the King's edict, what moral restraint did the Jews exercise regarding their enemies? How does this contrast with the actions of King Saul centuries earlier? (See 1 Samuel 15:1-3, 7-9 and 17-19.)

D. What did Mordecai do to commemorate the Jews' victory over their enemies?

E. What is this annual celebration called? Why?

7. From Esther 10:2-3, what final recognition and honor is paid to Mordecai? Why?

8. Take a moment to reflect back on the book of Esther. What important lessons, principles or truths apply to the people of our day?