



Walnut Street Church of Christ
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Happily Ever – Lesson Four
Fairest of Them All
God Used Esther To Save His People From Execution
(Esther 1-Esther 10)

Happily Ever After -- Theme: Fairest of them all -- God used beautiful Queen Esther to save His people from execution. (Esther 1-10) The Memory Verse for this lesson is Esther 4:14. “For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14)

Ahasuerus made a great feast for his nobles. The story of Esther is found in one of only two books in our Bible that have the names of women. These books are Esther and Ruth. The book of Esther opens with King Ahasuerus hosting a feast for his nobles. “Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:) That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace, In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him.” (Esther 1:1-3) He commanded Vashti to be brought to his drunken party to show her beauty to the people. “On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of

Ahasuerus the king, To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on.” (Esther 1:10-11)

Vashti refused to attend the function. Her refusal led to her being removed as queen. The reason for her refusal to come is not given in our Bible. Possibly the King was asking her to do something that she felt that violated her idea of decency. Perhaps she just did not want to be around a bunch of drunks. It is possible that she was just being stubborn and wanted to do her own thing. It will never be resolved in this lifetime as to why Vashti would not attend the gathering. The king was concerned and asked his advisers, “What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?” (Esther 1:15) The wise men were concerned that all the women among the Medes and the Persians would begin to show wrath and content to their husbands. They suggested, “If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.” (Esther 1:19-20) They sent a letter, “that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people.”

When Vashti was dethroned; a search began for a new queen. The advisers to King Ahasuerus said, “If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.” (Esther 1:19) This was the beginning of the search for a new Queen. The king ordered the gathering of a large number of the most beautiful women in his kingdom from which he would later select a queen. There was in Shushan, the palace, a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai. He had brought up Esther as his own daughter. “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.” (Esther 2:7) Esther had not told the people that she was a Jew. She was the one that the king selected to replace Vashti. “So Esther was taken unto king

Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. 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.” (Esther 2:16-17)

The villain in the book of Esther was a wicked man named Haman.

Haman had a high position in government and everyone bowing to honor him, except Mordecai. When he realized that Mordecai was a Jew he devised a wicked plan to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom. The king gave Haman permission to follow through on his wishes. “And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.” (Esther 3:8-9) When Mordecai and Esther found out about the decree they were deeply grieved. “When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry.” (Esther 4:1) Mordecai knew that Esther was the only one in a position to do something about this. “Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:13-14) Esther knew that if she approached the king he did not hold out the scepter she would perish. But she was bold and said, “If I perish, I perish.” All the Jews fasted and prayed about this matter at the request of Esther.

Haman wanted to humiliate and destroy Mordecai. Haman’s hatred for Mordecai was so great that he asked his family for a suggestion about what to do to him. “Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.” (Esther 5:14) Mordecai had saved the life of the king by warning him about a wicked

plot. Nothing was done to honor him. One sleepless night, the king realized that oversight. He asked Haman to put in motion a plan to honor a particular man of importance. Haman thought the man would be none other than himself. He felt shock, dismay and even disgust when he found out that he must honor Mordecai.

The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Esther told the King that she was a Jew and that wicked Haman had devised a plan to destroy her and all of her people. The king was very angry and he had Haman hanged on the gallows that he had built for Mordecai. “So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.” (Esther 7:10) However, there is still the problem of the unchangeable decree to kill all the Jews. The Jews were encouraged to prepare and defend themselves. “Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.’ (Esther 8:11) This brought great joy to the Jews. With the help of God and the blessings of Ahasuerus the Jews were victorious. “The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people.” (Esther 9:2) God had used Esther to save the Jews from execution. To celebrate their deliverance, the Jews inaugurated the feast of Purim. (Esther 9)

In order to be saved, a person must do exactly what God commanded, in exactly the way God commanded it. To become a Christian God commanded people to hear the gospel (Romans 10:17), believe in Jesus as the Christ (Hebrews 11:6), repent of all sins (Acts 17:30), confess Christ as Lord (Matthew 10:32) and be baptized to be saved. (Mark 16:16) When a person hears, believes, repents, confesses, and is baptized for the forgiveness of his sins, that person becomes a Christian and only a Christian. God adds that Christian to His Son's one church. The child of God who remains faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10) is promised a crown of life and eternity in heaven as a result of his faith, his obedience, God's mercy, and God's grace. (John 14:15, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 1:5)

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