



Esther 5-7

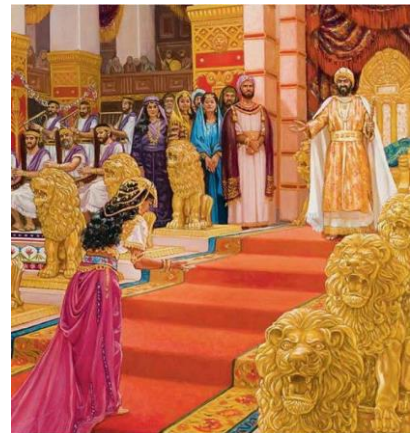
Esther has determined to identify herself as a Jew and to risk her life in order to save the Jews and defeat Haman, the enemy of God's people.

Centuries later, Jesus, God the Son, identified Himself with sinful humanity. He gave His life in order to save humanity and defeat Satan, the enemy of God.

1. Read Esther 5:1-8 *The Barbie Doll queen has become Braveheart*

a. How did Esther prepare for her approach to the king? (5:1,4)

b. When the king asked her the reason she had approached him that day, how did she respond? (5:4-5)



c. At Esther's banquet with Xerxes and Haman, the king again asked Esther what she wanted from him. What did she reply? (5:7-8)

In the ancient world, inviting someone into your home to share a meal that you had prepared was an expression of deep respect and affection. By this invitation Esther was affirming her desire for her relationship with Xerxes to be rekindled and also setting the stage to confront Haman.

2. Read Esther 5:9-14 *Haman plans to hang Mordecai*

- a. Consider Haman's mindset as he left the banquet. What has fueled Haman's pride and confidence? (5:11-12; see also Esther 3:1-2)

- b. What does Haman plan to do to eliminate the one remaining irritation in his life? (5:13-14)

Haman thought that being the Prime Minister of the greatest empire in the world was unassailable power, but we know that the real power is held by our unseen God, who rules all of history. Haman was friends with the king, but he chose to be an enemy of God. His downfall was inevitable.

3. Read Esther 6:1-14 *The king decides to honor Mordecai*

The situation is dire. The decree of death for the Jews has been issued. The pole on which Mordecai is to be impaled has been prepared. It seems that only a miracle can deliver God's people from death, but God doesn't need an obvious miracle; the salvation God brings for His people begins with something as ordinary as a sleepless night.

- a. What important information did the king "just happen" to learn on the night he could not get to sleep? (6:1-3) What did the king determine to do? (6:6)



- b. Who "just happened" to arrive as Xerxes was considering how to honor Mordecai? How did Haman misinterpret the king's question for him? (6:4-6)

- c. We find great satisfaction in this comical example of poetic justice. What humiliating service was Haman required to perform? (6:10-11)



- d. *For personal application:* After Mordecai exposed the assassination plot against the king (2:21-23), it would have been customary for Mordecai to have been given a generous reward for his loyalty. It “just happened” that Mordecai’s good deed was not rewarded. Mordecai may have been disappointed at the time, but now we see that God had a powerful purpose in that oversight. Are there times in your life when disappointments have turned out to be blessings in disguise? Share with your group if you feel comfortable doing so.

4. Read Esther 7:1-6 *Esther exposes Haman’s wicked plans*

- a. At Esther’s second banquet, she was ready to reveal her identity as a Jew and to intercede for the salvation of the Jews. We’ve observed that the king is volatile and hot-tempered. What challenge did Esther face in framing the request she must make of Xerxes?
- b. What did she say when Xerxes asked her to present her request? (7:3-4)

5. Read Esther 7:7-10 *The king sends Haman to be hanged*

- a. What was the king’s reaction to Queen Esther’s accusation? What was Haman’s response? (7:6-7)

- b. When the king saw Haman at the queen's couch begging for mercy, what did the king assume was happening? (7:8)
- c. How was Haman's plan for murderous revenge transformed into an instrument of judgment against Haman? (7:9-10)

Haman was the enemy of God's people. When Haman believed himself to be invincible, he was just a few days away from defeat and destruction. Similarly, the ultimate enemy of God's people—Satan—believed himself to be invincible when he saw Jesus dying on the cross. Yet three days later, when Jesus rose from the grave, Satan was defeated and his destruction was guaranteed. God's power will surely defeat every enemy. Cling to Him.

- d. ***For personal application:*** How does the story of Esther and the sacrifice of Jesus inspire you to keep trusting God even when life seems to be spinning out of control?

My prayer:

*Father, help me trust in Your good purposes for my life.
Help me remember that You reign over all nations.
You are my Protector, Provider, and Friend.*