

INJUSTICE WILL BE PUNISHED

LESSON SCRIPTURE: ESTHER 3; 5; 7

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: ESTHER 7:1-10

Key Verse: King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?" Esther 7:5

Esther 7:1-10 (NRSV)

1 So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther.

2 On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."

3 Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is my request.

4 For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king."

5 Then King Ahasuerus said

to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?"

6 Esther said, "A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

7 The king rose from the feast in wrath and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that the king had determined to destroy him.

8 When the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman had thrown himself on the couch where Esther was reclining; and the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the words left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face.

9 Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Look, the very gal-

lows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman’s house, fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on that.”

10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated.

WORD POWER!!!

- **Merely** – Barely.
- **Foe** – An enemy or opponent.
- **Compensate** – Give something in recognition of; reward.

GETTING READY!!!

One of the most famous stories in the Bible is about Queen Esther, for whom this book was named. There are only two books in the Bible named after women. Today’s scripture lesson comes from one of those books, the book of Esther. Esther did not grow up rich or in the royal court. Her story in the palace came into being after King Achashveyrosh (also known as King Xerxes) ordered a nation-wide search in Persia for a new queen. King Xerxes’ scout went and found Esther. She was very beautiful and kind. The king was very happy.

In the midst of everything, King Xerxes had a horrible advisor named Haman. The king had made him so high-ranking, that Haman became egotistical and full of himself. Haman did not like the Jewish people. Haman wanted everyone to bow down to him, but they would not. Esther was a Jew. However, her Uncle Mordecai told her not to tell anyone to protect Esther and

him. One day while Haman was roaming in the court, he told Mordecai, who had become a trusted official, to bow down to him. Mordecai would not bow down to Haman and this made Haman furious. Haman sent out an edict to ask the king that every Jew be killed.

Our lesson today is the continuation of Esther's story. In this lesson we will learn how Haman tried to trick the king and cause evil to the Jewish people. Let's see how God brought the Jewish people to victory in this lesson.

INTO GOD'S WORD!!!

In Queen Esther's day, when the king wanted to talk or conduct business with a person, the king summoned them himself. It was against the custom to just go and talk to the king on a person's accord. However, Queen Esther received some horrible news that caused her to make a tough decision. Haman was very furious that the Jewish people, including Mordecai, would not bow down to him. Haman decreed an edict that would have all the Jewish people killed. When Mordecai heard about it, he was distraught. He told Queen Esther about all that Haman had planned. Queen Esther immediately created a plan.

Queen Esther told Mordecai to tell the people to fast and pray for deliverance, and her favor with King Xerxes. The Jewish people did just that! When it came time, Esther though afraid, bravely went to the king. King Xerxes heard her request for a banquet to be thrown, and for Haman to be invited. Then,

Esther would ask the king there – her real request! Haman had no clue what was happening. He went to the banquet to dine with the king and queen. However, when Haman entered the gate, Mordecai was there and still refused to bow to Haman. This of course made Haman even more furious.

Queen Esther took the king aside and told him that someone was trying to kill all of her people. The king was furious. He asked who was the foe, and Esther told him it was Haman. Esther further confessed to the king that she was also a Jew. The king immediately ordered for Haman to be killed and threw out the edict.

Queen Esther was born to be and was in the right place at the right time “for such a time as this.” Her bravery and courage not only saved her uncle, but a whole nation of people! Esther’s commitment to God, and trusting God’s will, gave her victory. Though she had been born an orphan, God raised Esther to be one of the highest officials in the land. God’s plan for Esther’s life was an amazing one that saved not only her life, but her people’s as well!

USING GOD’S WORD!!!

God has awesome plans for each of our lives! It does not matter how or where we were born or what neighborhood we grow up in. God can do amazing things through *all* of us! Esther’s story reminds us that God’s ways are higher than our ways. Like Esther, when we have major decisions that we must make, we should go to God in prayer. When Esther knew she had to go before the king, she

not only fasted and prayed, but she asked others to join her in prayer and fasting.

One of God's many promises is that God will never leave you alone or on your own. This means that no matter where you go by yourself or with your family, God will be present with you. God was present with the queen when she went before the king and made her request. Queen Esther's trust in God outweighed the fear of the unknown. Her faith was not only rewarded, but helped to spare the lives of the Jewish people.

As Christians, we too should seek justice not just for ourselves but for others as well. We should always try to find ways to help others and be brave in our faith. We might not always know the future, but we can be secure in the *One* who holds the future: God.

REMIX!!!

Rethink the story of Queen Esther. One person is the heroine. Who is the villain? Who is the one who helped Esther gain victory? Use the printed passage to dramatize the story. When you are complete, the teacher will lead you in a discussion on how this story made you feel.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the two books in the Bible named after women?
2. Why was Haman so angry? Why did Haman want to kill the Jewish people?
3. What was the outcome of the story?

PRAISE GOD!!!

This story reminds us of the faithfulness of God throughout the generations. God's plan for Esther's life was not to abandon her, but to make her a queen who would influence the nation in which she lived. Esther trusted God and listened to the teachings of her uncle Mordecai. Though Esther left his house to become queen, she never forgot her roots and her faith.

In life we will have many choices. Some of the decisions we will have to make in life will be easy, while others will be more difficult. No matter what decision we have to make, we can trust God and listen to God's voice on how to proceed. God will never steer us in the wrong direction. As you go through this week, say a prayer for those (maybe even yourself) who have to make tough decisions. Ask God to lead and guide your footsteps to make the right choices.

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for being faithful from generation to generation. Help us to remember the power of prayer, and being in community with each other. Lord, when we have to make tough choices, help us to be brave and courageous like Queen Esther. Give us holy boldness to follow the path you have for each of us. Amen.