



## **Lesson 3 - CHARACTER NO MATTER WHAT**

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### **Key Focus:**

Esther's consistent and compliant character, Haman's wickedness, justice, God's faithfulness is shown to Esther and Mordecai. Secrets are revealed and deliverance is on the way. Provision is extended to God's people. There is rejoicing and celebration.

### **Key Scripture:**

*Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request." ~ Esther 7:3 ESV*

**Overview:** Although God's name is not mentioned in the book of Esther, the story of Esther emphasizes God's power. We should always have the character to do the right thing. Using our influence to help others as Esther did.

### **Quote:**

"Character is the moral strength to do the right thing even when it cost more than you want to pay." ~ Michael Josephson

**\*Just a thought... Has there ever been a time where your character had to speak louder than your voice? What could it have cost Esther if she didn't have the right character during this process?**

### **Haman Is Hanged**

Chapter 7:1-6

*1 So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. 2 And on the second day, as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king again said to Esther, "What is your wish, 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 found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for 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 been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king." 5 Then King Ahasuerus said to*

Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?" <sup>6</sup>And Esther said, "A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

<sup>7</sup>And the king arose in his wrath from the wine-drinking and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king. <sup>8</sup>And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. And the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the word left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face. <sup>9</sup>Then Harbona (wooden beam), one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that." <sup>10</sup>So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated.

### **Discussion:**

- Why do you think the King granted Esther's request?
- How do you think Haman felt when he found out Esther was a Jew?
- Esther identified Haman as the adversary and enemy, how do you handle when the adversary is exposed? Did you compromise your character?

### **Reflections:**

1. Trusting God completely brings great rewards.
2. God was working according to his perfect will in the negative situation that seemed out of control, to bring an illustrious outcome.
3. We are given moments to alter circumstances. Gods timing is providential. We must stand with courage. Remember fasting and praying brings clarity for deliverance.

### **Esther Saves the Jews**

Chapter 8:1-17

<sup>1</sup> On that day King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her. <sup>2</sup>And the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

<sup>3</sup>Then Esther spoke again to the king. She fell at his feet and wept and pleaded with him to avert the evil plan of Haman the Agagite and the plot that he had devised against the Jews. <sup>4</sup>When the king held out the golden scepter to Esther, Esther rose and stood before the king. <sup>5</sup>And she said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and if the thing

seems right before the king, and I am pleasing in his eyes, let an order be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the provinces of the king. <sup>6</sup> For how can I bear to see the calamity that is coming to my people? Or how can I bear to see the destruction of my kindred?" <sup>7</sup> Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows, because he intended to lay hands on the Jews. <sup>8</sup> But you may write as you please with regard to the Jews, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring, for an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring cannot be revoked."

<sup>9</sup> The king's scribes were summoned at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day. And an edict was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews, to the satraps and the governors and the officials of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language, and also to the Jews in their script and their language. <sup>10</sup> And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed it with the king's signet ring. Then he sent the letters by mounted couriers riding on swift horses that were used in the king's service, bred from the royal stud, <sup>11</sup> saying that the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, children and women included, and to plunder their goods, <sup>12</sup> on one day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. <sup>13</sup> A copy of what was written was to be issued as a decree in every province, being publicly displayed to all peoples, and the Jews were to be ready on that day to take vengeance on their enemies. <sup>14</sup> So the couriers, mounted on their swift horses that were used in the king's service, rode out hurriedly, urged by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Susa the citadel (place of safety).

<sup>15</sup> Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a robe of fine linen and purple, and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. <sup>16</sup> The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. <sup>17</sup> And in every province and in every city, wherever the king's command and his edict reached, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for fear of the Jews had fallen on them.

## **Discussion:**

- What does chapter 8 teach us about our relationship today, with ungodly governments?
- Haman's signet ring was taken and given to Mordecai and his home to Esther. Think of all the hard work Haman had to do to achieve his ring and house from the King but lost it all. Have you ever received something valuable that you didn't have to work to obtain?
- The Jews rejoiced when they heard of the counter-decree, and their deliverance from evil. How do we often respond when God has made a way out of no way for us? Do we take time to rejoice?

## Reflections:

1. It is better to earn respect than to expect it. Let God create a reputation that is reflective of your faith, trust, and character.
2. Just like Esther, God is working in the "behind the curtain" process of your life.
3. God honors those who serve Him. If you don't act for the Lord, he will use another.

## Summary of Esther Chapters 8 and 9

- With Haman's plan to kill Mordecai and all the other Jews almost fully foiled everything else starts to look up for the heroes too. King Ahasuerus gives control of Haman's house to Esther, who then gives it to Mordecai. Mordecai also gets the signet ring (bearing the royal seal) that Haman had had formerly.
- The king authorizes Mordecai to revoke Haman's decree using the king's seal. Mordecai has letters written in all the different languages of the king's empire, telling people not to go through with the massacre and giving the Jews permission to defend themselves using violence, if necessary.
- Even people who aren't Jewish claim to be Jewish because they're afraid of reprisals now that Haman's plot has been overturned. On the day when the Jews were going to be massacred the Jews end up banding together and killing the people who originally were going to try to kill them.
- The Jews kill over five hundred people in the citadel of Susa and kill every one of Haman's ten sons—but they don't plunder their wealth after they kill them. The king hears about this news and asks Esther what else she'd like him to do. **She says that the Jews should be allowed to keep killing their enemies for another day and that Haman's ten sons' corpses should be hanged from the gallows.**
- The king agrees and the Jews kill three hundred more people and hang Haman's sons' corpses, **while refraining from plunder**.
- The Jews have killed over seventy-five thousand of their enemies and they then rest and celebrate on the following day. This is how the holiday of Purim came to exist: Mordecai sends out another decree telling everyone that they should observe the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar as a holiday every year from now on.

- Chapter 10 ends the book stating that King Ahasuerus continued to have great power, exacting tribute money from many different lands. In the end Mordecai became the king's second-in-command and was able to benefit his people and all their descendants.