



K-1st Lesson

Introduction

- Turn on the fan. I brought a fan with me today. A fan moves the air around. What do we call it when we feel the air moving outside? *The wind.*

How can you tell which way the wind is blowing? *Move fan in different directions. Does the wind ever cause bad things to happen? Point fan toward a stack of papers or someone's hair to mess it up. The wind can do good things, too, like cool us off on a hot day. Blow fan gently toward students. Turn off fan when finished with discussion.*

Some people say luck is like the wind; you don't know when or where it will come or go, but you hope it will be good and not bad. They think good luck makes good things happen and bad luck makes bad things happen.

- But think about this: was anyone controlling the fan that caused the wind to blow? *Yes, the teacher.*
- What do you think controls everything that happens to us: luck or God? *God.*

Just like I controlled the fan, God is in control of everything that happens. There's no such thing as luck. In today's lesson, we'll see how God controlled events to save his people from a powerful enemy. And we'll see that luck had nothing to do with it.

Refer to Lesson 113 Flip Chart. In our last lesson, God caused King Cyrus to let the Jews return to Judah after 70 years of captivity. Zerubbabel led the group of people to the city of Jerusalem and helped them build the altar of God and lay the foundation of the temple. But some people did not want the Jews to rebuild, and they scared them so that they stopped building. But God worked that problem out. The temple was finished 21 years later, and all the Jews celebrated.

Esther Becomes Queen

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. Remember, not all the Jews left for home at the same time.

Some of them were still in Babylon, which was now called Persia, and they were about to face some scary problems of their own.

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. We will be reading from the book of Esther today. Esther is a book of true history, which shows God's control over events as he protects his people.

Esther was born in Persia. After her parents died, she was raised by her cousin Mordecai.

The book begins when the king got angry with his queen and sent her away. He needed a new queen, so all the beautiful young women, including Esther, were gathered together. The king would choose one of them to be his next queen.

Esther 2:17

The time came for Esther to go before the king. Would he like her, or would he throw her out like his first queen? Listen to Esther 2:17. *Have the student with the Bible bring it up and turn to the sticky note. Read the verse.*

- What did the king think of Esther? *The king loved Esther.*
- What did the king set on Esther's head? *The royal crown.*
- Show the Lesson Flip Chart.* Wow! Esther was chosen to be the queen of Persia!
- Was that good luck, or did God make that happen? *God made it happen.*

Mordecai, Esther's cousin, stayed close by. While he was at the king's gate, he overheard two men making plans to kill the king! Some might say it was lucky that Mordecai was there at the right time. But it was all part of God's plan. Because Mordecai told Esther what he had heard, she was able to tell the king, and his life was saved. All of these facts were written in the book of the chronicles, which was a journal of important events that happened in the kingdom.

Esther Saves the Jews

Although Esther was the queen, things were not good for the Jews in Persia. There was a powerful man named Haman who was very evil. When Mordecai would not bow to honor him, Haman got so angry that he formed a plan to destroy Mordecai and all his people—the Jews!

Refer to the Flip Chart. Haman went to the king. "O king," he said. "There are people living in your kingdom who do not keep your laws."

"What do you think we should do?" the king asked.

"We should destroy them," Haman replied.

"All right," the king agreed. "Do whatever you want."

Haman sent letters throughout the country, telling everyone that, on a certain day, they were to attack and destroy all the Jews.

- Oh no! Was this bad luck, or was God still in control? *God was in control.*

God is sovereign, in control. He knew all about Haman's plot to kill the Jews, and he allowed Mordecai to learn about it. Mordecai told Esther, "You must beg the king for mercy so the Jews may be saved."

"I can't do that," Esther explained. "The law says no one may go to the king without being called first. I could be killed on the spot—unless he holds out his golden scepter."

Refer to the Flip Chart. A scepter is like a long, gold or silver stick a king would hold as a symbol of his power and authority.

Mordecai reminded Esther that, although she might die by going to the king, she would still be killed by Haman's plan to destroy the Jews. "Who knows?" said Mordecai. "Maybe you were made queen—at just this time—so you can help us all."

Esther 4:16

Would Esther risk her life to save her people? Let's find out what she said to Mordecai. *Read Esther 4:16.*

- What did Esther tell Mordecai to do? *Gather the Jews and fast (not eat or drink) for three days.*
- What was Esther going to do after the fast? *Go to the king.*

Esther would go to the king. She was willing to die for her people, but she would trust in God to protect her.

Refer to the Flip Chart. When Esther went to the throne room, she didn't know if she would be welcomed or punished. But when the king saw her, he held out his scepter. Whew! What a relief!

- Was that good luck, or was God with Esther? *God was with Esther.*

Esther invited the king and Haman to a banquet, a fancy dinner. Then she asked them both to come to a second banquet. Haman was so happy

to be invited to dinner—twice! He was sure his plot to kill Mordecai and the Jews would happen very soon. He even built an enormous gallows to hang Mordecai on.

But that was not God's plan. One night, the king ordered that the book of the chronicles be read to him—remember the journal we talked about earlier? As the king listened, he remembered the time Mordecai stopped the men from killing him. God even controlled what was read to the king that night!

Later, at the second dinner, the king asked Esther for her wish and request. This time, Queen Esther told the king everything.

Esther 7:3–6

Let's find out what she said in Esther chapter 7. *Read verses 3–4.*

- What did Esther ask the king to grant for her wish? *Her life.*
- What did she ask as her request? *My people. The lives of her people.*

Suddenly, the king understood that Haman's plan to kill the Jews included his queen and Mordecai, who had saved his life.

The king was surprised when he heard this. Let's find out what happened next. *Read verses 5–6.*

- What did the king ask? *Who is he, and where is he who dares to do this?*
- Who did Esther say was the enemy? *Wicked Haman.*
- How did Haman feel at this moment? *He was terrified.*

The king was furious and ordered the death of Haman on the same giant gallows Haman had built for Mordecai.

- Was this bad luck for Haman? Who was in control? *God.*

Then Esther begged the king to stop the evil plan against the Jews. The king listened to Esther and told Mordecai to write a letter that allowed the Jews to fight back against anyone who attacked them.

Refer to the Flip Chart. On the day that was planned for the Jews to be destroyed, they fought all their enemies and won. It became a day of celebration because God was in control and saved the lives of his people!

God saved his people.

