

Women in the
Bible:
Esther
and me

“Your word is lamp
for my feet and a
light for my path.”

Psalms 119:105

The decision of a Queen



Esther

Key Scripture: Esther 1-10

Her Name Means "Star"

Introduction

Esther (her original Jewish name was Hadassah) was an orphan raised by her cousin Mordecai in a town called Susa during the reign of the king Xerxes. Mordecai and Esther's parents had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar.



Esther

Her Name Means "Star"

The story of Esther begins in a situation where king Xerxes had run into a problem in his family, as he wanted to show off his beautiful queen Vashti to his high-ranking guests. But the queen did not subdue into king's command even though his orders were the law that could not be changed in this kingdom. King asked help for this situation from his experts, and they painted a picture to the king that could lead into a chaos in his kingdom: all women would rebel like queen Vashti and therefore no man could be the ruler in his own household anymore.



Esther


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What was the solution from the experts? Current queen should be dismissed, and a special message should be proclaimed all over the kingdom: "every man should be the ruler over his own household". King was pleased with the solution.



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Later on, by the advice from the king's attendants a new queen was to be found by having a nationwide beauty pageant. Esther was caught up into this process and eventually she ended up being more than just a pretty face pleasing the eyes of the king. She became a queen, who made a life-threatening decision.

The story of Esther can be an example for us today. She acted upon a greater good despite what could happen to her.

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Discover

- Who was Esther?
- Esther's role before and after the great danger
- Significance of Esther's decision

Going Deeper

- 1. What kind of a person was Esther (Verses 2:7-10, 2:15, 17, 19-22)? Did she want to have the king and a half of the kingdom (Verse 2:8)?
- 2. What was the decree issued by the king that brought a great danger to the Jews living in his kingdom (Verses 3:12-15)?



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- 3. Why the decree was issued (Verses 3:1-11)?
- 4. How queen Esther found out about the great danger that was upon her people (Verses 4:1-9)?
- 5. How queen Esther reacted to the great danger, after all she was a Jew herself (Verses 4:10-11)? What characteristics she is showing?
- 6. What changed Esther's mind (Verses 4:12-14) and what she decided (Verses 4:15-16)?



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7. Compare the consequences for the king on his decisions/decrees (Verses 4:10-11) to the consequences for the queen on her decision (Verse 4:11). What does this difference tell you about the character of queen Esther and the character of the king?

8. Queen Esther did go to see the king and invited him to a banquet. What characteristics she is showing (Verses 5:1-8, 7:1-6, 8:3-8) in these verses?

9. How queen Esther's plea changed the great danger that was upon the Jews (Verses 8:11-12, 9:1)?

10. But where was God in this story?

Words for Today

11. What kind of a leader Esther was? What you could say about her ethics? Did her leadership change over time?

Why?

12. Was Esther able to hide herself during the great danger? What if she did nothing to help her people, could she hide then? Why?

13. Is there something that we could learn from Esther?

Why?

14. Have you faced "a decree" that was difficult to solve in your situation, or "a decision" that was hard to make? Did you struggle with ethical issues?

Words for Today

15. Did you receive help? Where? What was the end result? Why?

16. What kind of leadership lesson you learned from the previous experience? Is there something you would like to share with your friends?

17. Where was God in your situation?

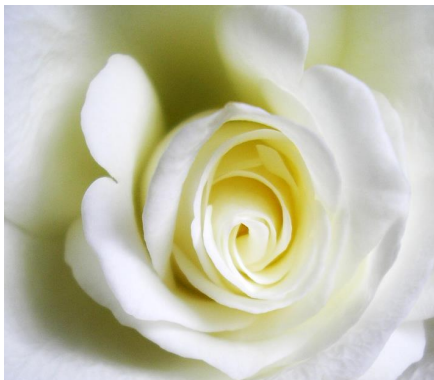
You may find yourself in situations that seem too difficult to handle. But you may enter in prayer the throne room of our heavenly King, and he will be welcoming you every time, since you are his beloved daughter!

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Questions for Discussion

1. How do difficult situations shape our lives? Why?
2. Is it good to learn from every difficult situation? Why or why not?
3. Could we use something that we learn from difficult situations for the benefit of God's people and His kingdom?
4. What kinds of leadership qualities are required from the daughters of the heavenly King? How are their ethics and why?



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Words of Wisdom

May God be with you wherever he calls you to serve as the queen of your own life. There may be good times but also difficult times ahead. But our King, Jesus Christ, has given a promise to us: "...I am with you always, even to the end of age..." (Matthew 28:20).



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My Prayer for Today

Lord, you are my true King. When you say something, it is truly and literally so; yet You are merciful, and approachable. I do not have to be afraid, but I can come to your throne the way I am. Please grant me wisdom for using the gifts and the abilities You have given to me for the benefit of Your people around me, and for Your eternal kingdom. Amen.

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Sharing

The story of Esther may be described with a title "From Rags to Riches", which would be a newsworthy success story even today, which would spread around on social media with the speed of lightning... yet that aspect was not the most important part of her story. She was asked to do something for other people that potentially could have had drastic consequences for herself. What could be said about her commitment? What kind of a leader was she? Although He is not mentioned, was God in the story after all?

Is there a woman in your life (or even yourself) who needs encouragement in her struggle to do something for others that may have some serious consequences for herself.