

Day Three: A Royal Risk

Let's Start with a Few Questions



Q: Who was the first hero we learned about?

Q: That hero obeyed God to save himself and his family from the great flood), but did he solve the problem of sin?

Q: Who was the second hero we learned about?

Q: That hero obeyed God to save his people from slavery in Egypt, but did he solve the biggest problem: sin?

A Hero Like You



Today we're going to learn about a hero who was a lot like you. She was a young girl in a very strange and scary situation, but she trusted God to help her do the right thing.

After Moses led God's people out of Egypt, the people did not always obey God. Whenever they got into trouble, they called upon God to rescue them. When they were safe they would turn away from God again. We might call that crazy behavior, but the Bible tells us that we *all* do it—which is why we need a savior.

*All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way....
Isaiah 53:6 ESV*

Esther lived in a time when God's people were captives in Persia. Esther lived in Susa, the capital city of the Persian kingdom. She lived with her older cousin Mordecai because she had lost both of her parents.

The king of Persia wanted a new queen. He decided to choose his queen in a strange way. He had a very long beauty contest with all the young women his servants could find in the kingdom.

Many, many women came to live at the palace in Susa to get ready for the contest. After more than a year of beauty treatments and practicing their favorite skills (like writing poetry, playing musical instruments, dance, etc.), they were invited one at a time to visit the king so he could decide if they would be the new queen.

The moment the king met Esther, he fell in love with her and made her the new queen! That might seem like a happy ending to Esther's story, but it was only the beginning.

A Dangerous Enemy



There was a terrible, mean man named Haman in Susa. He gave advice to the king. Haman was such an important official that the king said that anyone who saw Haman walking around town should bow to Haman to show him respect.

Mordecai was one of God's people. He knew that he should not bow down to anyone but God. Mordecai *never* bowed when he saw Haman. Haman got very angry about this. He hated Mordecai so much that he wanted to punish Mordecai—but not just him: he decided that he would destroy all of Mordecai's people—the Jews—in the entire kingdom.

Haman told the king terrible lies about the Jews. He told the king to make a law saying that all the Jews in the kingdom should be destroyed.

The king listened to Haman and made the new law!

This was very bad news for Esther's people! When the king of Persia issued a law, it could *never* be canceled! When they heard about the new law, God's people, the Jews, became very afraid and very sad. They prayed for God to save them.

When Esther heard about this, she sent someone to ask Mordecai what had happened. Mordecai sent a message back to Esther explaining the bad news and asking her to go to the king and ask him to find a way to save her people.

Esther did not want to do that. Her message back to Mordecai said:

“All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days.”

Esther 4:11 ESV

Esther told Mordecai that she was afraid to bother the king, because whenever someone bothered him without an invitation, they could be put to death!

Mordecai told Esther some very important things:

- The king's rule applied to *her* too, even if the king didn't know (yet) that she was a Jew.
- God *would* solve this problem somehow, whether she helped or not—wouldn't she rather be a part of God's plan instead of sitting around and doing nothing?
- Maybe Esther had become queen because *God had put her right where she needed to be to save her people!*

Esther decided to trust God to keep her safe and go and speak to the king. She told Mordecai:

“Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.”

Esther 4:16 ESV

The Royal Risk



After praying and fasting, Esther went (uninvited!) to see the king. He was so happy to see her! He stretched out the golden scepter, which meant that she would not be punished for visiting the king. He told her she could have anything she wished for.

Esther said that she would love to make a delicious feast for the king. Oh, and by the way, could the king invite his trusted advisor Haman? The king loved the idea and sent for Haman right away.

During the feast, the king asked Esther again what she would like from him, and promised that she could have anything she wanted. Esther didn't tell him her wish yet, though. Esther told the king that if she could make another delicious feast for the king and Haman the next day, she would make her request at that feast.

The king agreed, and Haman went home to boast to his wife about how important he was. Haman felt like nothing could stop him now. He decided that the next day Mordecai would be hanged where the whole town could see him punished.

At the feast the next day, Esther shared her wish with the king: she asked that her people, the Jews, could be saved from destruction. The king was angry when he heard that Esther's people were in danger! He demanded to know who would do such a terrible thing. Esther pointed at Haman and said, "A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!"

The king was so angry about Haman's wicked lies that Haman was hanged in the very place he had arranged for Mordecai to be hanged. Then the king gave Mordecai Haman's royal advisor job! The king asked Mordecai to try to undo the terrible law. Mordecai couldn't cancel the first law, but he could make a second law. The new law said that the Jews could gather in groups to fight back if anyone who tried to hurt them—and that they could keep all the wealth and property of anyone who tried to hurt them.

When this new law was made, God's people rejoiced! No one wanted to hurt them anymore! God's people were saved!

Pray, Listen, Say, Memorize



Prayer

God, please help us to be like Esther. Please help us to listen to You and do what You call us to do, even if we don't understand all of the details.



Today's Truth

God is *always* in control.



Memory Verse

If God is for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:31 ESV