

# Esther

Age-old question:

**What do you want to be when you grow up?**

Esther – humble beginnings to queen  
Dream job?

New question:

**What do you want to be remembered for?**

# Setting

- Events took place ~ 483-473 BC
- Persians in control
- King Xerxes (Greek) or Ahasuerus (Hebrew) reigned over a vast area (India to Ethiopia)
- Huge feast for 180 days

And when these days were completed, the king gave for all the people present in Susa the citadel, both great and small, a feast lasting for seven days in the court of the garden of the king's palace...

Esther 1:5 (ESV)

And drinking was according to this edict: "There is no compulsion." For the king had given orders to all the staff of his palace to do as each man desired. Queen Vashti also gave a feast for the women in the palace that belonged to King Ahasuerus.

Esther 1:8-9 (ESV).

On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded his eunuchs – I won't try to name them -- to bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal crown, in order to show the peoples and the princes her beauty, for she was lovely to look at. But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command delivered by the eunuchs. At this the king became enraged, and his anger burned within him.

Esther 1:10-12 (ESV)

# If it Pleases the King

- Queen Vashti refuses to be put on display
- Poor advisors = poor advice
- Vashti can never see the king again
- Avoid dangerous precedent - other women would follow her example and disrespect their husbands
- ...
- King calms down...

Now there was a Jew in Susa the citadel whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite, who had been carried away from Jerusalem among the captives carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away. He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was lovely to look at, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

Esther 2:5-7 (ESV)

# Context

- Exile to Babylon ~ 583 BC
- Three groups of people returned
- 1<sup>st</sup> group – God stirs up spirit of Cyrus
- Zerrubbabel leads group ~ 538 BC
- Esther part of minority in foreign land
- Hadassah = Myrtle     Esther – from Ishtar

So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many young women were gathered in Susa the citadel in custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegai, who had charge of the women. And the young woman pleased him and won his favor. And he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and her portion of food, and with seven chosen young women from the king's palace, and advanced her and her young women to the best place in the harem. Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known. And every day Mordecai walked in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and what was happening to her.

Esther 2:8-10 (ESV)

# Tough Situation

Taken to harem



12 months preparation



Taken to the king



Queen

Wife, lower  
status

**the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.  
Esther 2:17 (ESV)**

# Haman

- “Second in command”
- People to bow down and pay homage
- Agagite
- Hated the Jewish people
- Mordecai (and Saul) tribe of Benjamin

In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, they cast lots) before Haman day after day; and they cast it month after month till the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

Esther 3:7 (ESV)

# Haman's Decree

Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with instruction to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.

Esther 3:13 (ESV)

# The Dilemma

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)

# Crossroad

Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

Esther 4:13-14 (ESV)

# Courageous Decision

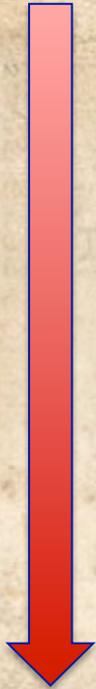
Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.”

Esther 4:15-16 (ESV)

**Seeking God's guidance...**

# Esther

First feast



Second feast



Expose Haman

# Haman

“Look at Me!”



Mordecai is  
spoiling it



Gallows built



Get permission



# “Other”

Can't sleep



Book of  
memorable  
deeds



Mordecai  
honoured

# Haman Exposed

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. 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.” Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?” And Esther said, “A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!” Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

Es 7:2-6 (ESV)

# The Result, Dilemma, Solution

Haman  
executed



Mordecai  
elevated

**“Haman’s” edict can not be revoked**

“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, on one day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.”

Esther 8:11-12 (ESV)

# Purim

**Fourteenth and fifteenth day of the month Adar,  
year by year**

**the Jews got relief from their enemies, from  
sorrow into gladness  
from mourning into a holiday  
days of feasting and gladness  
days for sending gifts of food to one another and  
gifts to the poor.**

# **Casting Pur (lots)**

**Haman cast Pur (lots)  
to crush and destroy the Jewish people**

**The lot is cast into the lap,  
but its every decision is from the LORD.**

**Proverbs 16:33**

**Coincidence or God's hand**

Situation	Esther	Us
Life in general	Very tough life, one day at a time	Challenges in life, lean on the Lord
God's commandments	Imperfect	Imperfect, hence God sent Jesus
Crossroads (courage)	Approach the king uninvited	Personal faith, courage, obedience
Seek Guidance	Fasting, Mordecai Followed though	Seek God's will, godly advice from others
Remembrance	Purim	Lord's Supper (Breaking of Bread)

# **Final Words**

**God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things.**

**Our lives – our “job” -- should be focused on knowing God, trusting Him, and seeking to honour Him.**

**Is this something  
you want to be remembered for?**