

Esther 4:4 - 6:14
Esther's Challenge
Lesson 3

Haman's evil plot to "destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews" was put into an official decree, sealed with the king's own signet ring then sent by courier throughout the entire Persian Empire. While Haman and King Xerxes were sitting down to drink, the city of Susa was bewildered at what had been decreed but Mordecai took immediate action. He put on sackcloth and ashes then "he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it."

Esther Finds Out - Esther 4:4-17

1. The decree had not been read within the palace complex. Using Esther 4, verses 4 and 5:
 - Who informed Esther that Mordecai was in sackcloth and ashes?

 - Concerned that he was not properly attired for court, how did she try and fix the situation?

 - But when Mordecai refused, what did Queen Esther do then?

2. Where did Hathach locate Mordecai? (Esther 4:6)

3. What two points did Mordecai emphasize in his message to Esther? (Esther 4:7)

4. What else did Mordecai do? (Esther 4:8)

5. "Hathach went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said." In her reply to Mordecai, she gives insight into Persian customs. What does she tell Mordecai about life inside the palace? (Esther 4:10 - 11b)

12. Having gained an audience with King Xerxes, he asks what her request is, then promises to give her a favorable answer even if it costs up to half his kingdom. What request did Esther make? (Esther 5:4)

- Why do you think she requested this?

13. How did the king respond to her request? (Esther 5:5)

14. Then the king asked her a second time what her request was. What does the text say he was doing at that time? (Esther 5:6)

15. After promising a second time to give a favorable answer to her request, even up to half his kingdom, what does Esther say? (Esther 5:7 & 8)

Haman's Hatred - Esther 5:9-14

16. After being part of such an intimate dinner with the king and queen, how was Haman feeling? (Esther 5:9a)

17. What changed that? (Esther 5:9b)

18. *"Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home."* What did he do then? (Esther 5:10b-12)

19. If that wasn't enough, what else did he add? (Esther 5:12)

20. One would think with all those wonderful blessings Haman would be happy, or at least content, but he wasn't. Where were his thoughts focused? (Esther 5:13)

21. His wife and friends come to his aid with wise counsel on how he could make himself happy again. What was their suggestion? (Esther 5:14)

God's Intervention - Esther 6:1-14

22. Their counsel delighted Haman so he went to work immediately to carry out their plan. While Haman was busy building, what was going on inside the palace? (Esther 6:1)

23. As the King's request was being fulfilled, what was King Xerxes reminded of? (Esther 6:2)

24. What other discovery did the king make? (Esther 6:3)

25. By this time it was early in the morning. The king wanted to make this matter right so he asked his attendants "*who is in the court?*" Who was there and why? (Esther 6:4)

26. God has a delightful sense of timing! Haman wants to speak to the king and the king wants to speak to Haman. Haman was ushered into the king's presence and asked a question. Using Esther 6:6-9:
 - What is he asked?

 - What is Haman thinking?

 - How does he answer the king?

27. The king was delighted at Haman's well thought out suggestion. Who does the king say should be the very one to follow such a marvelous plan and for whom? (Esther 6:10)

28. Stop here and review what the king said about Mordecai.

29. What does that reveal about Xerxes knowledge of Haman's decree?

30. Can you imagine Haman's dismay? What did he do about the king's command? (Esther 6:11)

31. How does the text say this affected him? (Esther 6:12 & 13a)

32. These same counselors that had given him the last good advice offer more words to cheer his spirit. What do they tell him this time? (Esther 6:13b)

33. Before Haman can react to their latest counsel, what happens? (Esther 6:14)