

Lesson Six: Trusting God—Turning Fear to Faith

The Story of Esther: Part I

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Through the book of Esther we discover precious truths about our God. We serve and love a great God—a sovereign and providential God—Who cannot lie and whose purposes for the world, in spite of sin and Satan, cannot be defeated.

God turned Esther's fear to faith. "Fear not" is found more times than any other commandment in the Bible—365 times. We learned in lesson three that God's names or titles appear 365 times as well. If we reflect on God's names, which reflect God's character, we need not fear 365 days of the year.

Fear is Satan's ace trump, but God has given us the victory over fear: *"But we have been born again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" ~I Peter 1:3. We are saved from the fear of circumstances as we trust Him: God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind. ~II Timothy 1:7*

Chapter One: The story of Esther begins in the days of Ahasuerus (Xerxes) who was the most powerful ruler in the day—he ruled from Ethiopia to India; Susa was the capitol. He hosted a banquet to rally the allies in a campaign against Greece. Queen Vashti refused the king's request to come before the guests. A law was decreed for the king to divorce Vashti and look for a new queen.

Chapter Two: The search begins for a new queen. We are introduced to Mordecai and Esther—both Jews. Mordecai was Esther's cousin—15 years her senior—who adopted her as his own daughter. Esther was fair and beautiful. When the decree became law, Esther was included in the search for the next queen, and she was chosen providentially. We begin to see God working behind the scenes. God showed His love and care in ways that Esther and Mordecai could not have planned nor figured out. The chapter ends with Mordecai saving the king's life, however, receiving no recognition.

Chapter Three: A new character, Haman, arrives on the scene. He was advanced in power and set above all princes under Ahasuerus. All the king's servants in the king's gate bowed in reverence to Haman as the king commanded; however, Mordecai did not bow. The servants spoke to him daily, "Why don't you bow down?" He hearkened not, and told them

he was a Jew. Haman noticed that Mordecai would not bow, and he was furious and wanted to kill him. Two servants told Haman that Mordecai was a Jew, and he should destroy all the Jews. The decree was passed and sent throughout the kingdom.

Chapter Four: Mordecai appeared before the king's gate in sackcloth and ashes. Esther's maids told her about Mordecai's plight. Mordecai gives her a copy of the decree, and charged her to see the king to make supplication for the people. He says to her, "Who knows if you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" She agrees to risk her life to approach the king and says: "If I perish, I perish." Esther's fear turns to faith as she makes a decision to go before the king.

Oh, beloved one, see the marvels of God's providential control in every event of your life, even though the unfolding crisis cannot be ignored in *your* story. Take heart, dear friend, although you can't see Him in your circumstances, God is there. Trust His Word and character. He is faithful. His presence will comfort and sustain you.

God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea . . . the Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Be still and know that I am God. ~Psalm 46: 1-2; & 7; 10.

We can trust our God because He proved His love at Calvary in sacrificing His Son for us. God is good and always good. **Remember:** You can't trust a God you don't know. Take time to know Him today through His Word.

Study and Reflection Questions

Study Questions

1. Read **Esther chapter 2**. What three evidences of God's hand at work do you see in this chapter?
2. Read **Psalm 27** regarding "waiting on the Lord." What does this psalm mean for you personally?

3. Read **Psalm 121: 1-8**. From where does our help come? Write verses 1-2.

4. The story of Haman in chapter 5 is a sobering reminder of the gravity of pride. Read **Proverbs 11: 2** and write the verse.

5. Read **Daniel 2: 20-21** that echoes our study in Esther. Write the verses.

6. Even though the book of Esther does not directly use the name of *God*, what does it reveal about His character?

7. Read the verse in **II Timothy 1: 7** regarding turning fear to faith. Write the verse.

Reflection Questions

8. How can faith in *God's* sovereignty impact your everyday living? Memorize **I John 4: 18** and meditate on what *God* is saying to you.

9. What decisions do you have before you today? As you reflect on them, remember that *God* is also at work and consider *God's* providence in your life in the past. You can trust in *God's* sovereignty and His power to work for His glory and your good.

10. Do you ever find yourself doubting that *God* will fulfill His promises to you? Review the following verses that speak of *God's* promises: **Isaiah 40: 1; James 1:5; John 1: 9**. Write the verses and thank the Lord for His goodness.