Day One: Surveying the Chapter

Please read Esther 7:1–10

Has a sudden turn of events ever caught you by surprise? Day to day living may proceed at a normal pace, and then suddenly, something unusual and surprising turns the course of events into something dramatic and unexpected. What a difference twenty-four hours can make! For Esther, what was about to unfold was the answer to days of fasting and prayer; for the king and Haman, this sudden turn was completely unexpected and unequaled.

In our last lesson we saw Mordecai honored while Haman was humiliated, leaving the reader on a note of optimism. Things were beginning to look up for God’s people. This week in our story, we will see God directly intervening on behalf of His people for His own purpose and glory.

As the second banquet approaches, Esther realizes it is time to break her silence. Esther already had two opportunities to speak up: first when she approached the king and he held out the golden scepter, and then at the first banquet when he asked her a second time what she wanted; but she wisely discerned that the time was not right. Once again the three of them are present: the king, the queen, and the prime minister. The stage is now set, the principle parties are in place, and the moment has arrived to speak out.

1. When you find yourself in a crisis situation, how do you usually respond? Are you as sensitive as Esther? Do you know when to listen and when to speak up? Do you rush to judgment and respond with panic in your eyes and voice? Or do you patiently wait to see what will happen next? Please comment.

Esther was in a desperate situation but she kept her emotions in control and her spirit in check. This is sometimes very hard for us to do as we wait for God to come to our rescue. Whenever we perceive what appears to be a delay of God’s answer or His coming, it is hard for us to believe that things will work out well. It isn’t until events have passed and He breaks the silence by intervening on our behalf that we see He was there all the time!
In the mystery of God’s sovereignty, He can be trusted. The question is: *can you be trusted with His silence?* Or will you only believe if He gives you the visible answer?

2. If you’re in a difficult situation today, look to Him. Get into His Word by looking up the verses below. Keep these in front of you to remember as you’re waiting for the answer to come.

a. 2 Timothy 1:7 (Write out the verse.)

   - What did you learn about God?
   - What did you learn about yourself?

b. 2 Corinthians 5:7 (Write out the verse.)

   - What did you learn about God?
   - What did you learn about yourself?

c. Matthew 7:7–11 (Summarize the verse.)

   - What did you learn about God?
   - What did you learn about yourself?

*Selah* . . . Look over this list of “do’s” and “don’ts” and put them into practice as they apply to you:

- ✓ DO take time to tap into the Scriptures that minister comfort to your heart and insight to your mind.
- ✓ DO remember to pray them back to the Lord.
- ✗ DON’T rush into making impulsive decisions and actions you may regret later on.
- ✗ DON’T talk too much to the people around you. If you are maturing in your Christian walk, you’ll demonstrate by your behavior that God can trust you with His silence.

Memory verse: “*To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: . . . a time to keep silent, and a time to speak.*” Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7
Day Two: Exploring the Text A Time to Speak

Read Esther 7:1–4

The king and Haman respond to Queen Esther’s invitation by arriving at the second banquet. The word in Hebrew for banquet literally means drinking, hence the phrase: the banquet of wine. This was normally a time for celebrating a special guest or event.

1. What question does the king ask Esther and what does he promise her? How many times has he made her this promise? v. 2

2. What words does Esther use to place herself at the king’s mercy? v. 3
   a. What two requests does Esther make of the king?

Esther was wise to choose her words carefully, humbling herself before the king, in an effort to please him with her request.

3. Up to this point in time, Esther had kept her heritage a secret (2:20). How does she now reveal who she is? v. 3
   a. Why does she say she is making this request? v. 4
   b. How would she have reacted if she and her people were sold into slavery rather than condemned to die?
   c. Esther used specific words to describe her fate and that of her people. What were those words? Who originally authored them? See Esther 3:13.

In her defense, Esther used the specific words her opponent used in writing up the death warrant against all the Jews. She didn’t need to embellish her words to make her point.

   d. How does Esther state that there was a financial motive behind the proposed annihilation? Why would this not be beneficial to the king? v. 4

4. Share about a time when you set things straight by using the truth of a situation to solve it rather than resorting to gossip and hearsay.

Review this week’s memory verse.
Day Three: Exploring the Text A Time to Judge

Read Esther 7:5–7

Esther assumed her role as queen, taking the initiative, and speaking out to save her people. Today we’ll look at the king’s reaction to her news and the outcome for all the parties involved.

1. What three things did the king demand to know? v. 5

2. How did Haman respond to being identified as the enemy of the queen? v. 6

   a. What word did Esther use to describe Haman’s actions?

3. What was the king’s reaction to Queen Esther’s revelation? v. 7

   a. Where did Haman turn to plead for mercy?

   b. What did he think was about to happen?

   What Haman had decreed against the Jews was turning on his own head. God’s Word promises in Galatians 6:7, “Whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.” Haman perceived that evil was now determined against him by the king. His only hope was to plead for mercy.

   King Ahasuerus angrily retreated to the palace garden to be alone. This impulsive, unpredictable monarch hesitated, taking time out to think before he acted. Was he angry over the fact that he had signed his own wife’s death warrant? Was he embarrassed at having appointed such a man as Haman to the office of prime minister? Would he look the fool for it? Or was he concerned about how to rescind an irrevocable law that would wipe out a nation when it had his royal approval? Perhaps it was all of the above!

4. When provoked to anger, what are some of the advantages of taking a “time out”? Do you employ these benefits at critical moments? Please share your thoughts.

Review this week’s memory verse.
Day Four: Exploring the Text  A Time to Die

Read Esther 7:8–10

The prophecy of Haman’s wife and friends was now being fulfilled (6:13). Haman had already recognized that the king determined evil against him. His only hope was that Queen Esther would intervene on his behalf.

1. While the king was outside in the palace garden, what had happened to Haman? v. 8

   a. Upon the king’s return, what did he accuse Haman of doing?

   b. What happened immediately afterwards?

2. Esther’s enemy had now become the king’s enemy. God’s Word says a similar thing about God’s children. Look up Exodus 23:22 and write it here in your own words.

   King Ahasuerus was blind-sighted to what was so obvious to everyone else. The confusion and state of mourning that permeated his city when the decree was handed out had escaped his attention. He was out of touch with what was happening around him.

   What about you? Are you in touch with what is happening around you? Are you keenly aware of what those closest to you are going through? The Bible warns about letting the heart become hardened over time to the reality of things.


   ∙ Does the above passage describe you in any way? In hearing do you understand? In seeing, do you perceive? Or has your heart grown dull over time? If the Holy Spirit has put a check of conviction in you as you work through this part of the lesson, don’t turn away until you deal with what He has revealed. Otherwise, you’ll continue to grow harder to the things of the Spirit. Jot down what God has shown you and spend some time in prayer.
A veil was thrown over Haman’s face (7:8), pronouncing his death sentence.

4. Next, who makes an observation and what does he say? v. 9

Harbonah’s announcement is, in a way, a second accusation against Haman. It was the revelation that he was intentionally making an attempt on the life of one of the king’s benefactors—Mordecai—the man who saved the king’s life.

5. When the king found out about the gallows, what did he command? v. 9

a. Describe what happened next? v. 10

We see here the devastating affect that pride has on its victims as it turns into jealousy, then envy, followed by the desire for revenge, and ultimately, death and destruction. We may wonder why evil sometimes prospers and the wicked get ahead in life. We’re puzzled by their prosperity and success. The writer of the book of Psalms felt the same way until he went into the sanctuary of God and received the understanding as to the real fate of those who appear to capitalize on their wicked imaginings and deeds. If you’ve been the intended victim of someone else’s wicked scheme, or you’ve stood back and wondered why they so often get ahead, the Lord would have you know and understand what His Word says about it.

6. Read through Psalm 73 and then give some thought to the following . . .

• What did you learn about the ungodly?

• What did you perceive about God?

• How will this understanding affect your perspective?

What a difference twenty-four hours can make! The queen who was very passive is now in control of herself and taking the lead. The king who was easily fooled is now very much informed. The enemy who was honored by the king is now the object of the king’s wrath. The gallows built for a humble Jew now holds the body of the Jew’s enemy! We’re told in 1 Corinthians 4:5: “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.” He alone is all knowing, all powerful, and everywhere present! What a difference our God can make! We should not attempt to predict how, when or where He will appear; but always be looking for Him to come!

Review this week’s memory verse.
Take a moment to ponder each request before writing out your prayer. Lift these requests at home in your quiet time with the Lord. (If you are participating in a group study, you will also have the opportunity to pray for these requests in agreement with others.)

*A prayer to speak out . . .*
God wants you to have the wisdom to know when to speak out and when to keep silent. It is always in season to speak the truth in love, particularly when you see an injustice taking place. Ask Him to put His words in your mouth and His passion in your heart. ___

*A prayer to judge between right and wrong . . .*
It’s impossible to put a good face on evil—you simply must call it what it is! Ask God to help you make a clear distinction between right and wrong and to properly evaluate and make your decisions on that basis. ________________________________

*A prayer to know God’s will in your circumstances . . .*
You’ve realized through your study how important it is to wait on God’s perfect timing—not to go ahead of Him or lag behind. Ask Him to help you see His hand in your circumstances and to be content where He has you right now. ________________________________

*Write out this week’s verse from memory:*
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