

# Gleanings of Grace

## Esther 5

### Lesson 18

The story of Esther takes place in the Persian Empire during the reign of King Ahasuerus around 100 years after the Babylonian captivity. Esther, like many of the Jews, did not return to Jerusalem. After the death of her parents, she was raised by her cousin, Mordecai. A woman of seemingly little importance, Esther set aside her fears and yielded to the dangerous opportunity, to be God's instrument in protecting her people.

#### OBSERVATION: Esther 5

1. Read Esther 5 using the Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework). After reading through the chapter, what would you say to someone if they asked you what it is about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to each of the people marked as key words.  
**Key Words:** *Esther, king* (referring to King Ahasuerus), *Haman*, and *Mordecai*
3. The contrasting words *but*, *nevertheless*, and *yet* are used four times in Esther 5. Mark the words. Choose one instance of their use and record what is being contrasted.
4. Scan the chapter and record your initial impression of:

*Esther*

*King Ahasuerus*

*Haman*

*Mordecai*

## **Background:**

### **Esther 1**

**Verse 3:** What did King Ahasuerus do *in the third year of his reign*?

**Verse 9:** What did Queen Vashti do?

**Verses 10,11:** *On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, what did the king command?*

**Verse 12:** How did Queen Vashti respond?

**Verse 19:** The remaining verses of chapter 1 recount the advice given to the king as those *closest to him* feared the Queen's disrespect would be followed by the other wives of the kingdom. What did they encourage the king to *decree*?

### **Esther 2**

**Verses 1-4:** *After these things, the king's servants advised him to appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather all the young virgins. Then what did they suggest?*

**Verse 9:** Esther was one of the young women taken to the palace. What does this verse disclose about Esther and how she was cared for?

**Verse 10:** Esther was of Jewish descent. What *had* she *not revealed*?

**Verse 17:** Esther's turn to appear before the king had finally arrived. How did the king react?

### **Esther 3**

**Verses 1-5:** *After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman above all the princes. All the king's servants bowed and paid homage to Haman. But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage. What was Haman's reaction?*

**Verse 6:** Rather than *lay hands on Mordecai alone*, what did Haman *seek* to do?

**Verses 8,9:** What did Haman request of the king?

**Verse 11:** What did *the king say to Haman*?

## Esther 4

**Verses 13,14:** Mordecai, in his distress, contacted Queen Esther. What was his challenge to her?

**Verse 11:** The above verses occurred after a back and forth set of messages between Mordecai and Esther. What was her concern?

**Verse 16:** Esther sent her reply to Mordecai. What was it?

### Read Esther 5:1-8

1. Consider Mordecai's challenge to Esther in chapter 4:14. Often, many of us are tempted to avoid confrontation or subjecting ourselves to possible danger. Consider the examples set by these saints. What are your thoughts?

Genesis 45:4,5 (Joseph)

Acts 7:25 (Moses)

- a. *For such a time as this* is the best known phrase in the book of Esther. Ponder your life. What are some of your circumstances where God might choose to use you that are unique to you?
2. Esther's decision was to call for a fast *and go to the king*, stating *If I perish, I perish*. What convictions might have been behind her resolution?
    - a. What would be some of the deciding factors for you if you were to make such a resolution?
  3. As chapter 5 begins, we find Esther *putting on her royal robe*. Can you hear Esther sigh as you imagine her entering the *inner court of the king's palace*? What thoughts do you think she might have had?
    - a. What was the king's response? verse 2

4. What did King Ahasuerus:

Ask Esther

Tell her (as reassurance that she would not die as she feared)

5. What was Esther's request?

6. At the banquet, King Ahasuerus asked the same questions of Esther, again reassuring her. Esther requested another banquet to be attended by the King and Haman on the following day. It wasn't enough for the Jews to pray and have faith that God would work. Someone had to act. What does James 2:20 teach?

a. How does an action prove faith?

7. What do you think Esther believed that prompted her and even impelled her to take the steps that she did?

### **Read Esther 5:9-10**

1. Haman left the first banquet eagerly anticipating the banquet that Esther had planned for the following day. Describe his countenance.

a. Record and reflect upon the words of Job 20:5.

1.) In contrast, what was the experience of the Jews after God honored Esther's obedience?

Esther 8:16

Esther 8:17

Esther 9:22

a.) Ponder the difference between Haman's joy and that of the Jews. What do you see?

2. Haman's *joy* was short lived. The report of his *joy* in Esther 5:9 is followed by the contrasting word *but*. What stripped away Haman's *joy*?
  - a. Rather than Haman's *heart* being *glad*, what word now describes the condition of his *heart*?
    - 1.) Define the word *indignation*.
    - 2.) What does it say when a heart can be moved from *glad* to *indignant*?
3. *Nevertheless*, Haman chose not to execute his assumed authority over Mordecai. What did he do?

### Read Esther 5:11-14

1. As the saying goes, "misery loves company". Sadly, Haman found in his wife and friends people who encouraged, rather than challenged, his *indignation*. He began by acknowledging his advantages. What were they?
  - a. What are some of your advantages?
    - 1.) As a believer, what do you have that has incredibly more value than your advantages?
2. Haman expressed in verse 12, a privilege that no other man in the kingdom had been given. What was it?
  - a. What message does an invitation from the Queen or someone of status tend to give?
    - 1.) What is the blessed reminder of Jeremiah 9:23,24?
      - a.) In what ways have you discovered *knowing God* to excel that of riches or status?
3. Esther 5:13 begins with another word of contrast. What did Haman declare about his advantages?
  - a. All too often, we can lose sight of what we have because of an obsession for something we don't have. Meditate on this and share your thoughts.

- 1.) King Solomon had been afforded all of life's pleasure. Reflect upon his words from Ecclesiastes 1:14. What did he discover?
  
- 2.) Paul too had been afforded much in his life. He also had suffered much. What was his conclusion as he expressed it in Philippians 4:11.
  - a.) Both Solomon and Paul knew God. What do you think made the difference in their lives?
  
  - b. What helps you to get your focus aright, when a lack of something in your life begins to steal your *joy*?
  
4. What solution did Haman's wife and friends propose? Esther 5:14
  - a. Haman's wife's and friends' remedy met Haman's desires. What have you learned about the suggestions of even well-meaning friends?
  
5. Thoughtfully write the words of the last sentence of Esther 5.
  - a. Now record the sad words (for Haman) from the last verse of Esther 7.

**Challenge:** Read Esther 6-10 and summarize the rest of the story.

**REVIEW: Esther 5**

1. What lessons did you glean from the choices of:  
Mordecai  
  
Esther  
  
Haman
  
2. What lessons have you gleaned for your own life?

*For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake,  
because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people.*

*- 1 Samuel 12:22*

## Observation Worksheet

### Esther 5

Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house. <sup>2</sup> So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter. <sup>3</sup> And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you--up to half the kingdom!" <sup>4</sup> So Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him." <sup>5</sup> Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, that he may do as Esther has said." So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared. <sup>6</sup> At the banquet of wine the king said to Esther, "What is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!" <sup>7</sup> Then Esther answered and said, "My petition and request is this: <sup>8</sup> If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said." <sup>9</sup> So Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai. <sup>10</sup> Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh. <sup>11</sup> Then Haman told them of his great riches, the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king. <sup>12</sup> Moreover Haman said, "Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king. <sup>13</sup> Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." <sup>14</sup> Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet." And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.