

Rabbi Curt Landry Shares the Modern-Day Importance of Queen Esther's Story

Even though we are given many accounts and life stories of women in the Bible, our knowledge of them is often limited. In fact, only a small number of believers, if asked, could provide more than a handful of names and/or histories of these women. But God used these women for a reason. He had a purpose not only for their lives on earth, but for their descendants and all the generations to follow—and He is still teaching us through their testimonies today!

Join us as we complete our examination of the life and calling of one of these women of God: Hadassah, the orphan who became Queen Esther.

Kingdom Advancing Women

Often, we take the limited number of biblical women when compared to biblical men to mean that God does not use women to advance His kingdom except in special circumstances. But, simply by exploring these women of the Word deeper, God's use of women becomes evident.

From Deborah to Ruth. Leah to Abigail. Or Rachel to Rahab. Every woman who chose to follow God was used mightily for His kingdom. Each path was different, but even when circumstances appeared difficult or dangerous, these women chose to accept His plans, His purpose. They chose to walk in His ways, acting with faith, courage, hope, obedience and love. They stood strong in their faith no matter what—and as a result, God not only chose them as biblical examples, but He blessed them and their descendants abundantly!

One such woman of the Word was Hadassah, the girl who became

Queen Esther.

“And the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king” (Esth. 8:4, NKJV).

The Domino Effect of Faith

Esther’s faith, along with her obedience, fasting and prayers, brought the favor of God upon her choice to seek the king unsummoned. Her season of God hiding His favor to prepare her for this moment was over, and the king held out his golden scepter toward her in order to spare her life—the favor of God firmly upon her (see Esth. 5:1-2). Yet, God did not prompt her to state her case immediately. Instead, Esther bids the king and Haman to dine with her, not once, but twice.

During that first banquet, she did not bring forth the subject of the saving of her people but instead asked that the king and Haman would come to another banquet.

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!”

Then Esther answered and said, “My petition and request is this: 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” (Esth. 5:6-8).

While this may have a surface appearance of delaying tactics, or even fear, it was far from it. God was guiding her steps, preparing a victory far greater than she ever dreamed. For, during the time between the first and second banquet, several things happened:

– Haman, thinking he was building a gallows for Mordecai, actually built his own.

- God directed the king's steps to rediscovering how Mordecai had saved his life.
- The king, wishing to honor Mordecai, asked Haman how to honor such a one as this.
- Haman, thinking he was the one to be honored by the king, suggested the way Mordecai would be honored.
- Haman, humbled by God, had to lead Mordecai through the streets in the same manner he had thought he was to be led.
- Because Mordecai was now favored by the king, Haman did not press the king to put Mordecai on his gallows.
- The Jewish position was strengthened because the king not only favored Esther, but now, unknowingly, the cousin who raised her.

All of this occurred between the first and second banquet—within 24 hours!

Plans to Prosper

At the second banquet, the Lord's plan for the Jews and Haman came to pass. Esther brought her petition and request to the king, and discovering Esther's heritage, he was enraged—all the more so when, upon returning after a few minutes away, he discovered Haman collapsed on the couch Esther sat on. Seemingly as though he was set to attack her:

Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king. When the king returned ... Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, "Will he also assault the queen while I am in the house?" (Esth. 7:7-8).

Thus, hearing that Haman had built a gallows for Mordecai—Esther's cousin and the man who had just been honored for saving the king's life—the king ordered that Haman should be hung upon that same gallows.

Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf, is standing at the house of Haman."

Then the king said, "Hang him on it!"

So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's wrath subsided (Esth. 7:9-10).

However, while the danger of her going before the king was over and Haman's life was ended, Esther's task was not finished.

She, obtaining the permission of the king, had to work with Mordecai to find a way to save the Jews, for no decree having been sealed with the king's signet—which Haman used—could be revoked.

Thus, with the wisdom of God they created a way for the Jews to defend themselves from the decree, gaining relief from not only Haman, but all who wished to oppress them!

"By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives—to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them" (Esth. 8:11).

With this decree sent forth—and an extension of it within the city of Shushan—the Jews were able to defend themselves.

Haman had meant to destroy the Jews, but when God stepped in, not only were they saved, they found themselves blessed and safe. For with Esther and Mordecai in the king's favor, and

the decree's results, many feared the Jews, while some even chose to become Jews themselves by following their customs and God.

Thus, to honor what God had done, Esther and Mordecai enacted another decree. One that instructed the Jews of Persia to begin a yearly celebration to be known as Purim. Pur, coming from the casting of the pur, or casting of lots, through which the day had been chosen to destroy the Jews, was now to become a time to celebrate! Jews celebrate their victory over their enemies, not only by joyfully feasting, but by giving presents to one another and gifts to the poor:

“And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus. ... Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim” (Esth. 9:20, 29).

And Esther?

While we do not know much of her life after these events, we do know that Esther was blessed. She was given the house of Haman, which she gave to Mordecai to tend, and both she and Mordecai were responsible for not only the decree that saved the Jews in Persia, but also for enacting Purim.

Additionally, it is believed by many biblical scholars that Esther was the mother or grandmother of Darius II, the Persian king who lifted the ban that had disallowed the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. If this is fact, then not only would Esther have saved untold Jews, but she would have been, through blood and/or imparting aspects of her faith, responsible for allowing the temple to be rebuilt!

She was blessed not only during her lifetime but beyond—through the lessons and truth found in the book of Esther, through Purim and, quite possibly, through her descendants.

Her faith to put God's plans first, even in the face of danger, propelled the kingdom of God further on His chosen path. She placed her trust in God, accepting His will, even if it did not align with hers. All of this set Esther in a place where not only others knew blessing, but she, herself, experienced it.

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