

The Chosen Life: Studies in Esther

Esther Ch. 6

Inductive Women's Bible Study — Lesson 6

Is God in the details? The events we read about in this chapter remind us again that a man may plan his way, but the Lord directs his steps (Proverbs 16:9). On this particular day, we see that truth played out in the lives of three men.

After a sumptuous meal with the queen and his most trusted subject Haman, King Ahasuerus crawled into his comfortable bed looking forward to a good night's sleep. Instead, he tossed and turned and finally resorted to having someone read the history books. He discovers that he owes his life to Mordecai, who was never properly thanked. Suddenly, the king's top priority for the day is to reward this man who, until one sleepless night, meant nothing to him.

On this particular day, wicked Haman had already written "hang Mordecai" on his to do list. He planned to get an early start since he was invited back to another private dinner with the king and queen. He fully expects this to be a great day—his spirits rise even higher after assuming *he* is the man whom the king desires to honor.

On this particular day, Mordecai goes to king's gate just as he does every day. A shadow still hangs over his people and Mordecai waits for some sign that Esther has succeeded in winning the king's ear. Whatever he expected this day to hold, he certainly *didn't* expect to see Haman coming towards him with the king's royal robe and a fine horse.

God oversees every detail of life. He determines when a "chance" encounter becomes a turning point in the life of an individual or the course of a nation. Simply put, only God can cause a coincidence on purpose!

Background Mordecai's name was recorded in the king's book of chronicles. This was the official record of events in Persian history. Since the king's sleepless night occurred during the twelfth year of his reign, numerous volumes would already have been filled. Of all the books to choose from, the king's servant *just happened* to reach for the volume containing Mordecai's name!

It was a point of honor among Persian kings to reward their benefactors promptly and generously. But Mordecai's good deed went unnoticed. For five years, Mordecai's service was forgotten. But his reward would come in God's perfect time and work according to God's perfectly detailed plan.



Getting started. Find a quiet place to study. Take your Bible, your lesson and any other study tools you want to use. Plan to spend about an hour each day on your lesson. **Pray.** Take time to settle your heart, focus your thoughts and ask the Lord to help you see with clear eyes.

“Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in Your law.” – Psalm 119:18 NLT

Esther Ch. 6 Read the passage, without interruption, two or three times. If possible, read from more than one Bible translation. Briefly describe in your own words what you have read.

With each lesson, a “working” text is provided for your convenience. You can use this to scribble notes, write down word definitions, highlight events—whatever you find useful to your own personal study. The translation used will vary from week to week.

Working Text for Esther Ch. 6

New King James Version (NKJV)

1 That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. 2 And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. 3 Then the king said, “What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?”

And the servants who attended him said, “Nothing has been done for him.”

4 So the king said, “Who is in the court?” Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king’s palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

5 The king’s servants said to him, “Haman is there, standing in the court.” And the king said, “Let him come in.”

6 So Haman came in, and the king asked him, “What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?” Now Haman thought in his heart, “Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?”

7 And Haman answered the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor,
8 let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head. 9 Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!'"

10 Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken."

11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"

12 Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered. 13 When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."

14 While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.



Use the second column to record information you gather from other sources. You may want to look up names and places in a Bible dictionary, map or encyclopedia. What else can you discover about the people and places mentioned in this chapter?

Esther 6:1–9

My Research and Observations:

[illegible]

Esther 6:10–14

Bible Facts and Information:

My Research and Observations:



INTERPRETATION – *What does it mean?*

Look for a spiritual lesson. Be careful not to read into the Bible an idea that is not there. Examine each verse in light of the verses around it. To help you find a spiritual lesson, ask questions such as, “Is there a command to obey? A promise to claim? A condition to that promise? Is there a warning to heed? An example to follow or avoid?” **State the lesson in one simple sentence.**



APPLICATION – *How does it apply to me?*

We don't study the Bible just to gather information—we want to spiritually grow. Our heart needs to be open to change. The only way to move truth off the pages of your Bible and into your life is to **put it into action.**

To apply a spiritual lesson, we must examine ourselves and take deliberate steps to do something with what we have learned. Ask yourself: Is this a new lesson, or does it reinforce what I already know? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? What changes does it require? Think of how the lesson relates to you and what specific course of action you will take. **Write your application in the form of a question to make it personal.**

Esther 6:1–9

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

Esther 6:10–14

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

Summary

Write a simple sentence that summarizes what the chapter is about. _____

Give a title to the chapter that will help you personally to remember it. _____



Take A Closer Look

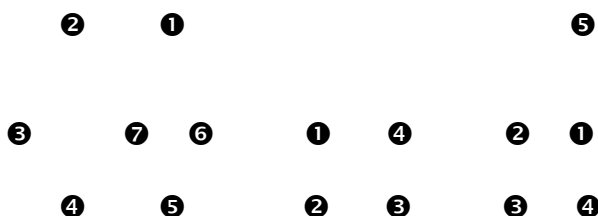
“During that night, the king could not sleep...”

Esther 6:1

Mordecai’s situation appears to go from bad to worse. Haman isn’t content to wait for Mordecai’s destruction along with all other Jews—he wants Mordecai dead *now*. Since ambitious Haman always got what he wanted, who would dare get in his way?

One of the clear lessons from this book is that God is in the details. Seemingly trivial and unrelated circumstances all fit together in the plan of God. From a human perspective, life doesn’t always make sense and certainly doesn’t seem fair. Good deeds are forgotten; evil actions go unpunished. Have you ever been in a situation where you found yourself asking, *where is God?* Those are times to remember we walk by *faith* not by sight.

The circumstances of life weren’t always clear to Mordecai or Esther at the time. Keep in mind that each of the main characters had a limited (and in some cases, faulty) perspective. Do a simple exercise as you review what has happened in the story thus far. When you string together insignificant details and coincidences, who is in control?



1. Ahasuerus gives an elaborate banquet.
2. Vashti refuses to come at the king’s order.
3. Ahasuerus consults his advisors; deposes Vashti as queen.
4. Ahasuerus holds a beauty contest.
5. Esther, a beautiful Jewish orphan, is taken into the palace.
6. Mordecai is Esther’s guardian.
7. Hegai favors Esther more than the other young women.

1. Ahasuerus marries Esther; makes her his queen.
2. Mordecai counsels Esther to keep her Jewish identity secret.
3. Mordecai uncovers a plot; Esther informs Ahasuerus; no reward is given; Mordecai’s good deed is forgotten.
4. Mordecai refuses to bow to Haman.

1. Haman plots against the Jews; Ahasuerus signs a decree.
2. Esther learns Mordecai is mourning at the king’s gate.
3. Esther invites King Ahasuerus and Haman to a banquet. The king offers to grant whatever she asks.
4. Haman builds a gallows; plans to kill Mordecai.
5. King Ahasuerus can’t sleep; plans to honor Mordecai.

According to the following verses, how should we view our circumstances?

Proverbs 15:3 _____

Jeremiah 29: 11 _____

Jeremiah 32:27 _____

Romans 8:28 _____

Matthew 19:26 _____

When circumstances seem to be going against you, what comfort and guidance can you find from the following scriptures?

Isaiah 25:4 _____

Isaiah 41:10 _____

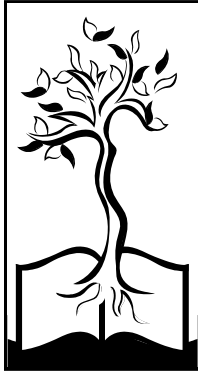
Psalms 37:28 _____

Luke 12:7 _____

Philippians 2:13 _____

Is there a particular situation or area of life that you find difficult to understand? What will you do to practice walking by faith and not by sight? Be specific.

Choose one of the scriptures listed above to be a source of strength and help to you. Write it out here and begin today to memorize it.



God's Word Bearing Fruit

For you personally, what has been the most important lesson from this chapter? How will you put what you have learned into practice?

Something to Think About . . .

“To the child of God, there is no such thing as accident.
We travel an appointed way.
When true faith enters, chance and mischance go out for good.
The *woman* of true faith may live in the absolute assurance that *her* steps
are ordered by the Lord.”

— A.W. Tozer —

