

## Chapter 20: The Queen of Beauty and Courage



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever observed great wealth and opulence, as some describe it "how the other half lives"?
  - a. What did you see, notice & what were the circumstances?
  - b. What is/was your reaction to that?
  - c. Is this a biblical (Christlike) reaction or is it something else?
  - d. What about the thought that if you have a shelter, a change of clothes, and a bank account you're in the top 10% of wealth in the world, does this change or inform your reactions?
2. Have you ever had a public argument?
  - a. If yes, what were the circumstances & the result?
  - b. How did you reconcile after the argument? (*Was it better than Xerxes and Vashti?*)
3. The issue at stake wasn't the relationship between the King & Queen, but the example that Vashti set for all the women in the kingdom.
  - a. Can you think of contemporary examples where people (*men or women*) of influence affected the behavior of others by their behavior?
4. Why was a big deal for Xerxes to let it be known that "*all women will respect their husbands*"?

- a. Is this still an important part of homes and relationships today?  
If so why?
  - b. How does respect for husbands look in America 2019?
5. It was good to be king, when he stopped being angry, he could have beautiful young women brought to him and he did so.
  - a. What does this strike you as with 2019 eyes?
  - b. What about 500 BC eyes?
6. Put yourself in Esther's sandals, what would you do in Esther's situation?
  - a. Would you have been compliant or disruptive?
  - b. She won the favor of Hegai, the attendant and was granted special treatment –
    - i. Have you met people who gain the favor of those who are in authority?
    - ii. Do you respond with jealousy or admiration (*or a mixture of both?*)
    - iii. What should be the response of someone who fears God and is placed in a similar situation?
7. You may have heard of boxers who prepare for a fight for six months in advance, Esther's "beauty treatments" lasted for twelve.
  - a. Do you see any comparison?
  - b. What kinds of contrast do you see?
8. What was it, do you think that made Esther more attractive than any of the other women?
  - a. Knowing the end of the story how much do you attribute all of this to God orchestrating everything in advance?
  - b. Do you ever see similar orchestrations in the world today? If so, in what ways?
  - c. What is the proper response of a Christian when we see God at work?
9. It was important for Esther to keep her nationality a secret, why do you think this was so?
  - a. Do you know of anyone today who seeks to keep their Christianity secret?
  - b. What is your reaction to someone acting this way?
10. Mordecai heard of an assassination plot and reported it. What kind of citizen does this show him to be?
  - a. What actions are Christians to take when we observe laws being broken?

- b. Why is it good for the Christ follower to live in a land where there is a rule of law?
11. Haman also was elevated in the court of Xerxes – Do we see people who are anti-God elevated to authority today?
    - a. What response should the Christian have when someone with authority actively seeks to harm Christians.
    - b. What was the response of Mordecai to Haman? & what was the fallout of this encounter?
  12. Haman had Xerxes' ear and made a proposal that sounded good – *'eliminating a rebel population'* and because of the trust that Haman had, it became a command of the king.
    - a. What kind of leader does this show Xerxes to be?
    - b. What kind of bitterness and revenge does it take not to just try to eliminate one person but all of their race?
    - c. Why is racism in general, and anti-Semitism in particular wrong according to the teachings of the Bible?
  13. With the decree made Mordecai called upon Esther to use her influence.
    - a. What held her back from acting immediately?
    - b. What were the consequences for going into the king's presence unbidden?
    - c. What was Mordecai's confidence in-What did he trust God would do?
    - d. What did Esther do to prepare for going to the King?
  14. When was the last time you faced a threatening situation? What was your reaction?
  15. Why do you think that Xerxes acted with grace and allowed Esther to live?
  16. Why didn't Esther just blurt out what she desired right away? Why the banquet, two days of meals?
    - a. How would you have handled that kind of pressure?
    - b. What do you think Xerxes was anticipating?
  17. In the middle of these two days of feasting, providentially, Xerxes couldn't sleep and so as a cure for insomnia he had the chronicles read –
    - a. What did he hear about Mordecai there?
    - b. What did he determine to do?
    - c. How did this cause Haman great personal humiliation?

- d. Have you seen or heard God work out reversals of fortune for His people? What were they?
18. Haman's wife spoke these words "Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him — you will surely come to ruin!" but it was too late to change Haman was already committed.
- a. Are there any situations where bad behavior or choices have gone on too long and the consequences are unavoidable?
  - b. What kind of respite do people in those situations seek?
  - c. How should the godly respond?
19. What did Esther say her petition was?
- a. What was the response of Xerxes?
  - b. What did Haman do? & what was his fate?
20. What did Esther do for Mordecai?
21. Because the decrees of the Medes and Persians could not be repealed the Jews were still in danger from Haman's act.
- a. What did Xerxes do to protect them?
  - b. What was the result when the date came for the Jews to be attacked?
22. What festival is celebrated still today by the Jews to celebrate this event in their history?
- a. From what does it get its name?
  - b. How does even this show the sovereignty of God?
  - c. Does your family have celebrations where you remember the working of God in it's past?
23. What does this account show us about the working of God?
- a. In the hearts of rulers?
  - b. In the protection of His people?
  - c. Does God still work on behalf of Christians in the hearts of rulers and on behalf of His followers? If yes give examples.
24. What particular ways have you experienced God's faithfulness and protection?
- i. Are there steps can you take to show that you trust in the faithfulness of God?
  - ii. What ways can you copy what Esther and Mordecai did?