

=BOOKS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 17

Esther

Objects to have:

A sign for this book: ESTHER

All About Esther

Chalk and chalkboard or posterboard and marking pen

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

Do you remember Nehemiah? He worked in the palace of the king in Babylon. Then he had another job to do—a job that he had to do for God. This is the job he had to do: After making the long, long trip to Jerusalem, he had to be the boss over the people who were building up the wall again around Jerusalem. That was a big job, and while the walls were being built, there was lots of trouble. But the job got done!

(While saying the following, draw a stick figure with a crown on his head.) Far away from Jerusalem, where Nehemiah had lived, the king was in his palace. This king's kingdom was very big. The king's name was Ahasuerus; he was also called Xerxes. King Ahasuerus, or Xerxes, lived in a beautiful palace. Just one room in that palace was much, much bigger than any room that any of us have ever seen. There were huge, beautiful pictures that were made on cloth; the pictures hung from the ceiling to the floor of this very, very large room. In this room was the throne of the king. The throne—a big, beautiful chair of gold and silver—was where the king sat. The throne was on a little platform so that the king was higher than anybody else who would come into the room.

Telling the story:

The king sat on his throne, thinking. He had a decision to make. He had to choose a queen. The men who worked in the palace suggested to the king, "Let young ladies who live in your kingdom be chosen to come here. You can choose one of those young ladies to be your new queen. Let only young ladies who have never married and who have always kept themselves pure be the ones who are chosen to come." The idea sounded like a good one to the king.

Sweet, young ladies who wanted to live right were gathered from all over the kingdom of King Xerxes. One of the young ladies was named Esther. Esther was an orphan; both her father and her mother had died. Esther's cousin, Mordecai, was like her new daddy. Esther's Cousin Mordecai worked for the king in the palace. Cousin Mordecai thought, "How wonderful it would be if Esther could become queen. She is a beautiful young lady. More than that, she has always been obedient, and she has always done right." (Draw a stick figure of a lady.)

Esther's Cousin Mordecai (draw a stick figure of a man next to the young lady) talked with Esther. He said, "Esther, the king is deciding who should be his new queen. You should go to see the king. Now when you go to the king, do not tell him that you are a Jew—an Israelite. He knows that I am a Jew because I was captured in battle and taken to his castle, but he does not know you. If any of his servants know that you are a Jew, they probably won't let you in to see the king." Esther was always obedient, and it would not be hard to follow Cousin Mordecai's directions now. She would get ready to go see the king.

Some servants had charge of taking the young ladies to the king. The servants said, "It is not time to see the king yet. You have to get ready to go." The young ladies were gathered together in a room. The servants talked to the young ladies, "You may have anything that you want. See all these pretty new dresses; you may have as many as you want. Do you want expensive perfumes? Choose some. Whatever you want, just ask; we will get it

for you.” Esther, being unselfish, did not ask for anything. They insisted that she take a new, expensive dress and that she take some perfume. She accepted that, but that was all she would take.

Esther then got ready to go to see the king. She washed her hair and she took a bath; she knew how important it is to be clean always. She got dressed and was wearing her new dress and a couple of drops of the perfume that had been given to her. When it was time, Esther was taken to the king.

Several other young ladies were taken to see the king, also. When the king saw Esther, however, he liked her better than the other young ladies. The king liked the pure look in Esther’s eyes; he liked the way she walked and talked and acted. She looked and acted like a queen. King Ahasuerus said, “That young lady will become the new queen.” How exciting! (Draw a crown on her head.)

Now I’ll tell about another man who worked in the palace. (Draw another stick figure of a man.) King Ahasuerus liked this man; this man worked hard and was pleasing to the king. The man’s name was Haman. The king one day said, “I want to honor this man. Make this man Haman the most important prince in all of the kingdom. Command that everybody who comes into his presence must bow before him.” Now, what God knew and what Cousin Mordecai knew about Haman was that Haman hated Jews. God is angry with anybody who hates His people.

Cousin Mordecai was outside the palace when Haman came out to go home. All the people who were around were bowing to Haman, but Cousin Mordecai did not bow. This made Haman very angry—proud man that Haman was! Haman said, “Mordecai will be sorry. He will be sorry that he did not bow to me.”

Haman got home. Haman said to his family, “The king has honored me.”

Everybody in Haman’s house said, “Congratulations, Haman! How nice that the king honored you!”

Haman’s mouth turned down. Haman said, “Everybody is commanded to bow to me, but that Jew, Mordecai, will not bow down to me. That makes me so mad! What should I do?”

Haman’s wife said, “How dare he? Why don’t you arrange to kill Mordecai? Build (draw a gallows) a gallows in the yard of our house, and arrange to have Mordecai hanged—killed—on that gallows. Arrange to have him hang there by the rope on the gallows.”

Haman really liked that idea. With Mordecai out of the way, there would not be anybody who would dare not to bow before him. Or, would there? Haman thought, “Throughout the kingdom there are thousands of Jewish people. They love Mordecai. They will probably do as he did, and not bow to me, either. I have a plan to get rid of them all.”

Haman went to talk with the king. He told the king that there were some people who were not really loyal to the king, and that these people should be killed. That was not true!

The king believed Haman’s lie! The king did not know who these people were; he just believed that no one in the kingdom should be disloyal to him. If the king had asked Haman who the people were, the king would have known it was a lie. But the king did not ask. The king said, “Let me sign the command that all these bad people should be killed.” The king wrote his name on the bottom of the piece of paper that said that these people should be killed, even the women and the children and the babies of the Jewish families. That meant that Mordecai should be killed, too.

The news about the command went all around the palace. One of the men of the palace went to Mordecai’s office. “Mordecai, have you heard?” he asked. “All the Jews will be killed.”

Someone ran and said to Queen Esther, “Queen Esther, Mordecai is very sad about something.”

Esther said, “Go find out what the trouble is.”

The messenger went and talked to Mordecai and then went back to Queen Esther. “Queen Esther, Mordecai says that you have to go talk to the king. You have to beg the king not to let the command about killing the Jews be made a law.”

Oh, but Esther could not go to the king and talk to him just anytime she wanted to! She always had to wait for the king to say that he wanted to see her. If Queen Esther had gone to talk to the king without the king’s asking her to come, she could be killed! Esther thought and thought and then decided that she had to go talk to the king so that her people would not be killed. Haman’s new law could not be put into the law books!

Esther sent the messenger back to Mordecai. The messenger told Mordecai, “Queen Esther said that she will go to talk to the king. Before she goes, though, all the people have to be asked not to eat for three days.” When people have something very important to pray about, they often do not eat for a while. That is called fasting. They fast so they can pray more.

At the end of the three days Esther went to the beautiful throne room of the king. She stood in the hall outside the room, where the king could see her. I think that her heart was pounding hard. She waited to see whether the king would let her come into the room to talk with him, or whether he would give the command that she had to be killed for coming without the king’s asking her to come. The king saw her. He lifted his hand and motioned for her to come on in to talk with him!

Queen Esther walked in. She bowed before the king and said, “Oh, King, I would like to make a fancy banquet. I think it would be nice to honor Haman.” What was Queen Esther saying? The king thought that was a nice idea, and Haman was proud about the banquet that was going to be given for him. What was Esther planning?

The time for the banquet came. The tables were set for the big party. The people all came, and everybody was having a good time, especially Haman.

Then Esther said, “King, may I ask you for something?” The king gave her permission to ask. Esther said, “Oh, King, there has been a terrible plan made against my people. There have been lies told about them. They will be killed for something they have not done.”

The king asked, “Who would have made such a plan?” Esther pointed her finger at Haman. The king commanded, “Have Haman put to death for this terrible thing that he has thought up.” They dragged Haman off and had him hanged on the very gallows that he had built to kill Mordecai.

Immediately the king sent messengers all over the countries. The king said, “Command that no Jews—no Israelites—be killed. That was a very bad order that was given.”

LET’S LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE FOR TODAY: Esther 4:14, (Mordecai answered Esther), “...who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

And that is our new Bible book for today. Let’s say together the names of the books of the Bible through Esther. (Review.)