

# THE KING IS COMING

Survey of Judah Alone, Captivity, Return, and Years of Silence

LESSON 17: THE REIGN OF ESTHER . . . *HISTORY*

**MEMORY.** Memorize the key dates in Esther: 483 BC (feast, Esth 1:3), 479 BC (marriage, 2:16), and 473 BC (deliverance, Esth 8:9, 12; 9:1).

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**READING.** Read Esther. After doing your reading, in the space below write down something that you found to be interesting or important. It can be something that you have never noticed before or something that you want to remember and apply.

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## DISCUSSION.

1. *Background.* Xerxes (Ahasuerus) reigned from 485-465 BC. Whom did Xerxes depose as queen after she failed to appear before him? (Esth 1:10-22) Xerxes thereafter took an army of 100,000 men to Greece but was delayed at Thermopylae and defeated at Salamis (480 BC). He returned home and found a new queen (479 BC).

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2. *Esther*. What was Esther's Hebrew name? (Esth 2:7) (Optional: What do her Hebrew and Persian names mean?) Who raised her after her parents died? Why did the king of Persia choose Esther to be his new queen? (v. 17; cf. vv. 8-16)

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## DISCUSSION.

3. *Haman*. Why did Haman (the Agagite) hate Mordecai (the Benjamite)? (Esth 3:1-6) What did Haman decide to do? (vv. 7-15) How did Mordecai respond, and what did Mordecai urge Esther to do? (4:1-14; cf. vv. 15-17) Summarize how Esther subverted the plans of Haman (5:1-7:10).

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4. *Deliverance*. What decree did Xerxes allow Esther and Mordecai to make so that the Jews would not be annihilated? (Esth 8:9-14; cf. vv. 1-8; 9:11-15) What feast did Mordecai establish to commemorate this deliverance of the Jews? (9:20-28; cf. vv. 18-19) (Optional: What does the name of the feast mean, and why did the Jews refer to the feast by this name?)

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**CONNECTION.** In what way(s) may Mordecai and/or Esther foreshadow Jesus Christ? (Any connection to Christ will be implicit as the NT does not quote or allude to Esther.)

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**APPLICATION.** Mordecai and Esther grow in character (integrity) throughout the book of Esther. They start by hiding their (or at least her) Jewish identity, but eventually they are willing to die for the people of God. Ask God to work on you, that is, to develop your faith and increase your courage, so that when he needs you to take a stand for him and his people, you will readily do so—just as Mordecai and Esther did.