

Esther

Esther's given name was Hadassah. Her family had been among the Jewish exiles taken from Judah a hundred years earlier. She had been orphaned and then adopted by her uncle Mordecai. Thirty years prior, when the first wave of dispersed Jews had returned to Israel, Mordecai, along with thousands of other Jews, remained in Susa, a Persian city 770 miles East of Jerusalem. Through a series of unusual events, this young, beautiful Jewish girl was elevated from obscurity to become queen of arguably the world's most powerful ruler, Xerxes the King of Persia. Esther's faith and boldness saved the Jewish people from extermination, and provide an example of the type of faith that God wants from His people today.

For Discussion

1. How was Haman's plot a threat to God's plan for world redemption?
2. In Esther 4:14 Mordecai tells Esther that if she refuses to intervene, then God will deliver the Jews through another means (i.e. through someone else) but that Esther will perish. At such a stressful moment, how could Mordecai be so confident of God's deliverance for the Jews?
3. Do you agree with the narrator that attempts throughout history to exterminate the Jewish people are evil and that they will not prevail? Why or why not?
4. Esther's statement, "If I perish, I perish" is the critical turning point in the story of how God uses her for His purposes. Which do you believe would be more difficult: Choosing martyrdom or "dying to self" each day?
5. What is the hardest part of "laying down your life" each day, and subjecting it to God's will? In what area of your life do you find the most difficulty in dying to self?
6. Write down 1 area of your life where you need to fully surrender to the Lord's will.
7. How does the Holy Spirit want you to respond to what has been discussed here?