

## Minor Characters In Major Roles

### Lesson 6 – Mordecai

*“God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”*

Rom 8:28

- Visitors, prayer requests, prayer

#### Acts and Facts

- “I refused to bow to anyone but God.”
- “My foresight saved a nation.”
- “I raised my cousin after my aunt and uncle died.”
- “I uncovered a plot to take the life of Ahasuerus, a powerful king.”
- “Haman was hanged on the very gallows he had built for me, and I got his job.”

**Q:** Have you ever had someone say to you, “Maybe this is God’s way of telling you something?” How does that make you feel?

**Q:** How do you react when someone suggests that God may have placed you in such-and-such a situation for a reason?

#### The book of Esther

1. Action, adventure, love, intrigue, deception, treason, betrayal, victory
2. But **ultimately**, this is a book about the **providence of God**
3. Written about **465 B.C.**
4. Covers a 10 year period, 483-474 B.C, during **reign** of the Persian king **Ahasuerus**
  - a. Many Jews **returned to Jerusalem** from Babylon in 536 B.C.
    - i. The temple rebuilding was completed in 516 B.C.
    - ii. Ezra, Nehemiah deal with the remnant who returned to Jerusalem
  - b. Many other Jews **remained in Persia** (Iran) after the captivity
    - i. Esther deals with Jews who remained
5. Interesting note: Nowhere in this book is God mentioned

#### The story of Mordecai

1. Queen Vashti “**rebels**”
  - a. She wouldn't come when **summoned** to “show her beauty” at the royal banquet
    - i. Banquet culminated a 180-day "exhibition of grandeur"
    - ii. Most likely a request to behave **immorally** (remove clothing)
  - b. **Angry king seeks council!**
  - c. Wise men warn: "*All women will rebel!*"
  - d. [**Providence of God**] Vashti is "put away"—Men are to be **masters!**
  - e. Beautiful **virgins** rounded up for **harem**—most pleasing to become **Queen**
2. Introduction of Mordecai and Esther
  - a. <**Read 2:5-7**> (Mordecai raising Esther "as his own" after **death** of her **parents**)
  - b. Esther taken into the king's **harem**
    - i. [**PoG**] She finds **favor** with **harem keeper** and is given **special treatment**
    - ii. Spends one year in **preparation** before “going in” to the king.

- c. <Read 2:10-11> (Esther doesn't reveal she's Jewish; Mordecai stays in **touch**)
  - d. [PoG] <Read 2:16-17> (Esther wins the King's **heart**—she's made **Queen!**)
  - e. <Read 2:20> **Still** doesn't reveal she's **Jewish**—still following Mordecai's instructions
3. Mordecai foils an assassination
- a. [PoG] Sitting at king's gate, Mordecai overhears two guards **plotting** to **kill** Ahasuerus
  - b. He tells **Esther**, who tells the **king** in Mordecai's name
  - c. Plot **investigated** and guards **hanged!**
  - d. Event recorded in **official record** book of the kingdom (records carefully kept)
4. Haman and his decree (Chap 3)
- a. **Haman** becomes 2<sup>nd</sup> in command—all must **bow** to him
  - b. Mordecai **won't bow**. See Deut 5:7-10 (“*You shall have no other gods before Me.*”)
  - c. <Read 3:5-6> (Haman filled with **rage**—decides to **destroy** all Jews)
    - i. Note Haman's **fear** of the Jews
  - d. Haman **lies** to king (says “a certain people” don't keep the king's laws)
  - e. Offers a **bribe** to the king (10,000 talents of silver to treasury)
  - f. Haman given **signet** ring, told “*do what you wish*” with them
  - g. Decree is **sealed**—all Jews to **die** on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month (Feb - Mar)
    - i. This date was arrived at by **casting lots** with the **pur**
5. Mordecai appeals to Esther
- a. Mordecai **mourns** decree—**sackcloth** and **ashes** and **bitter wailing**
  - b. Esther learns of the decree—she's **anguished**
  - c. Mordecai tells Esther to go to king and **plead**—she's afraid to go **unsummoned**
    - i. If **golden scepter** not extended... DEATH!
  - d. [PoG] Mordecai's **important reply** <Read 4:13-14>

**Q:** What all has Mordecai said here?

**A:** Crux of the lesson:

- **Circumstances** can't protect you from **persecution**
- Mordecai has recognized that God puts us in situations for a **reason**
- Suggests that God has **allowed** Esther to become queen to do **His** will, not hers
- Remember blind man of John 9? He was born blind “*...in order that the works of God might be displayed in Him*” (John 9:3)
- We may not know God's **purpose**, but we know He's in **control**:

*“God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28)*

- Also, Mordecai had **faith** that even **without** Esther's help, God would find a way to save the Jews

*“The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord” (Prov 16:33)*

- All situations—good or bad—are basically **spiritual**
- We need to **encourage one another**, to **remind** one another that God is **in charge**

**Q:** So, if God is **in charge**, and will get things done **with or without us**, why get involved?

**A:** It's **our** fate that lies in the balance, not His!

6. Esther's audience with the King
  - a. Esther **agrees** to talk to king, but Jews must **fast** for three days.
  - b. [PoG] She enters inner court—king receives her "safely," asks what she wants
  - c. She invites **king and Haman** to a **special banquet**
  - d. At banquet, king asks "*what do you want.*" Esther invites both to a **second banquet** the next day.
7. Haman's arrogance over Mordecai
  - a. Leaving first banquet, Haman passes by Mordecai. Mordecai doesn't **bow**.
  - b. Haman **angry**. Calls wife and friends.
  - c. Advised to **hang** Mordecai
  - d. Haman orders a **gallows** to be built, but needs king's permission to hang Mordecai
8. Haman humbled
  - a. [PoG] Same night, king **can't sleep**. Calls for reading of the official **record book**
  - b. Learns **nothing** has been done for Mordecai and calls for **advise** <Read 6:4-14>

**Q:** What did Haman's wife mean in 6:13 regarding Mordecai being "*of Jewish origin*"?

**A:** They recognized that the Jews were protected by God! (Remember Haman's fear of killing just Mordecai in verse 3:6)

9. The second banquet
  - a. Haman arrives at second banquet.
  - b. Esther reveals Haman's **plot** to "sell out" the Jews
  - c. [PoG] King **angry**—orders Haman hanged on "Mordecai's" gallows!
10. Jewish nation victorious
  - a. Esther given Haman's house; tells king who Mordecai really is
  - b. Mordecai given king's **signet** ring
  - c. Esther puts Mordecai in charge of Haman's house
  - d. Esther begs king to **spare** Jews
  - e. [PoG] Mordecai's **decree**: Jews can **defend themselves** <Read 8:10-11>
  - f. Many subjects **glad** for the Jews <Read 8:17>
    - i. Again, note their **fear** of the Jews
  - g. [PoG] Jews **victorious!** Saved from **extinction!**
  - h. Haman's ten sons (and 75,000 others!) killed
  - i. To this day Jews celebrate the Feast of Purim
11. Mordecai's reward
  - a. [PoG] <Read 10:1-3> (Mordecai becomes 2<sup>nd</sup> in command—gets Haman's job!)

### Characteristics of Mordecai

1. Honored no one above God
2. Confident in God
3. Saw the right thing for Esther to do and encouraged her to do it
4. Concerned for God's people