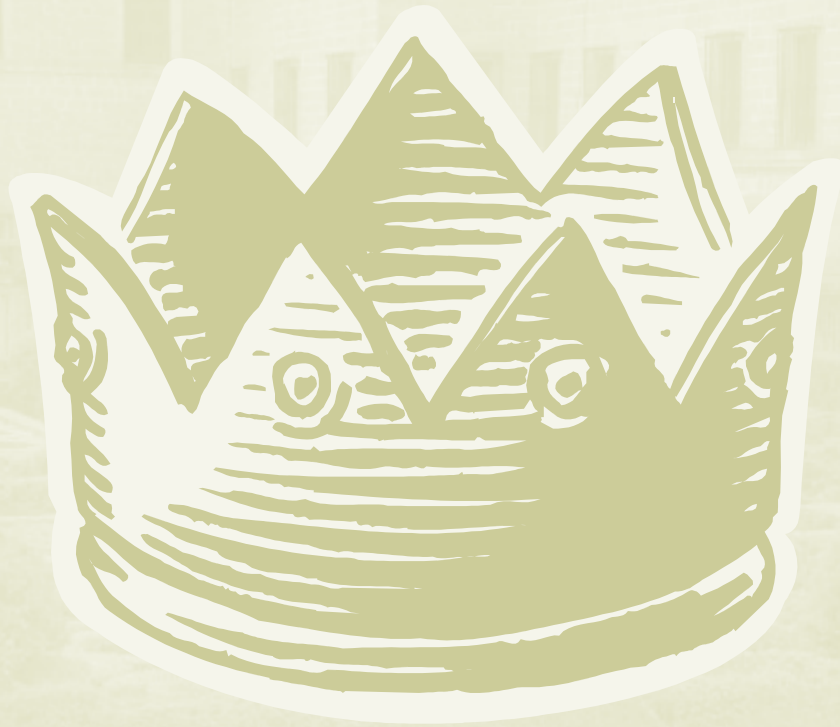


The Persian Press

ALL THE NEWS FROM INDIA TO CUSH



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Teacher's Copy

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Created for use with young, unchurched learners
Adaptable for all ages including adults

The Persian Press

ESTHER 5:1-14

DINNER WITH THE QUEEN!

HEADLINES:

- After fasting and praying, Queen Esther courageously went before the king
- The King was pleased to see Queen Esther
- Esther waited on God's timing to talk to the king
- Haman's pride and anger led him to plot Mordecai's death even before the appointed time

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EXTRA, EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

The last we reported about Queen Esther, she had agreed to go, without invitation, to the king - even if it meant she must die.

Queen Esther, along with all the Jews in Susa, has been fasting for three days. She has also been praying to the One True God. "On the third day Esther put on her royal robes. She stood in the inner courtyard of the palace. It was in front of the king's hall." (Esther 5:1 NIV) The king was sitting on his throne, facing the entrance, and when he looked out into the courtyard he saw Queen Esther standing there. Remember, this could have been death for the queen. But, because the heart of the king is in the Lord's hand, like channels of water, "he [the king] was pleased with her. So he reached out toward her the gold rod that was in his hand. Then Esther approached him." (Esther 5:2 NIV) Queen Esther touched the tip of the gold rod (scepter).

The king wasn't angry at

Queen Esther at all. He asked, "What's up, Queen Esther? What do you need? Tell me and I'll give it to you. I'll give you as much as half of my kingdom." But all the queen requested was that the king and Haman attend a dinner tonight!

Can you imagine? Queen Esther hasn't eaten any food for three days, but she has prepared dinner for the king and for Haman!

The king loved the idea! He and Haman went at once. While they were there, the king asked Queen Esther again what she needed. She still didn't tell the king, but she invited the king and Haman to eat dinner with her again tomorrow night. Queen Esther will answer the king's question then.

Since then, we have heard nothing but bragging out of Haman. "He left the palace in a good mood." (Esther 5:9 NIV) But guess who didn't greet or bow down to him at the palace gate . . . Mordecai! Haman was furious but controlled himself.

When Haman got home he called his family and friends together. He bragged about how many sons he had. He bragged about how rich he was. He bragged that he had a higher position in the kingdom than any of the other nobles. He bragged that he was the only one invited to lunch with the king and queen. But believe it or not, none of that seems to satisfy Haman at all as long as Mordecai lives.

And then a very wicked thing happened. "Haman's wife, Zeresh, and his friends spoke up." (Esther 5:14 NIV) "Hang him," they said. "Don't wait until the 13th day of the 12th month. Get the pole ready, talk to the king. Then you can go to lunch with the king and queen tomorrow a happy man!" Haman thought it was a great idea and is getting everything ready tonight!

Reporting from Susa: Fortress of the Persian Empire



WHAT'S WRONG WITH ANGER?

Have you ever been angry? I think all of us should probably raise our hands! Do you know what the Bible says about anger? We talked a little bit about it a couple of weeks ago. Matt 5:22 (MSG) says, "I'm telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder." Murder begins as anger and hate inside of us and it grows and grows into something we might never have expected. (Talk about

the story of Cain and Abel from Genesis 4.) Did you know that it is possible to be angry and not sin? "Scripture says, 'When you are angry, do not sin.'— Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. Don't give the devil a chance." Jesus was a perfect example of anger without sin. (Look at John 2.) Anger comes from us trying to be in control instead of trusting God with what

goes on in our lives. When you realize that you are feeling angry, take this advice. "Get rid of all hard feelings, anger and rage. Stop all fighting and lying. Put away every form of hatred. Be kind and tender to one another. Forgive each other, just as God forgave you because of what Christ has done." (Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV) How did God forgive you? He sent His one and only Son to die for you!



"Anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder." Matthew 5:22 MSG

*But those who
wait upon God get
fresh strength.
They spread
their wings and
soar like eagles,
They run and don't
get tired,
they walk and
don't lag behind.
Isaiah 40:31*

FROM THE EDITOR

Esther was a courageous woman. She was afraid at first, but she had learned well from her cousin Mordecai. She prayed and fasted and waited on God. How about you? Are you courageous? Even if you don't have family members to teach you about God, you are here, learning. Will you pray? Will you wait on God? Maybe you don't really know God, but you can.

Come to Him, believing that He loves you and that He made a way for you to be free from the sin that tangles you up. He sent His One and Only Son. Give your life to Him and follow Him. When you wait on Him what happens? Look at our memory verse, Isaiah 40:31. We get "fresh strength" for the things God wants us to do. What else? We will be able to

soar on wings like eagles and see things we couldn't have seen before. We will also be able to run without tiring and walk without lagging behind! Doesn't that sound wonderful? How does it happen? When we wait on God. When we trust His timing and His plan, even though we don't understand how it could possibly work. Don't you want that to be you?

BEHIND THE SCENES

Why in the world would Queen Esther have prepared a dinner or waited until the next day for another dinner when she already had something she wanted to tell the king? During her three days of fasting and praying, she was focused on God - and His plan. Waiting for God's timing, to do not only **what**

He wants you to do, but also **when** He wants you to do it is very important. Esther was willing to trust God and wait. So, when the king asks the queen a second time, "What's up, Queen Esther? What do you need? Tell me and I'll give it to you. I'll give you as much as half of my kingdom," the queen

invites King Xerxes and Haman to another dinner. "Esther could have done everything today that she's going to do tomorrow, but she's trusting God's timing on this. So she says, 'There's something I do want to say to you, but I want to wait till tomorrow.' For some reason, as we'll soon learn, God's timing

requires one more day."* (Read Isaiah 40:31.)

* Swindoll, Charles R. *A Woman of Strength and Dignity: Esther*. Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997.



ACTIVITIES



Hide God's Word in your heart!
Psalm 119:11

Memory Verse Activities for Isaiah 40:31 - Play tag, like "Sharks and Minnows." but call it "Eagles and Mice."

Make origami eagles.

Provide coloring sheets that include the memory verse.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

For older students: Discuss waiting on God. Did Esther sit around with her hands crossed? (Think about the dinner she served.) We have yet to see the complete results of Esther's reliance on God, so talk about the uncertainty of the future, while being completely certain that God is in control. Compare that to Hebrews 11:1.



*I spend time
thinking about
your rules. I
consider how you
want me to live.*

Psalm 119:15

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

Use the golden scepters you made last week and act out the lesson.

Make puppets for each character in the story. Encourage your students to reenact the story.

Sit down for snack. Use place cards with your students' names and the memory verse.

Use shoe boxes and make dioramas of what the throne room may have looked like. Be sure to include figures of Queen Esther and King Xerxes.

Make eagle snacks. Stack a coconut bonbon on top of an chocolate and crème cracker. Insert a cashew for the nose and paint on eyes.



Those
who wait
on God...



**IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:
ESTHER 6:1-14**

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