

Esther Becomes Queen

Esther 2:1-18

MEMORY VERSE

Proverbs 31:30

"Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a women who fears the Lord, she shall be praised."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A balloon and a small piece of paper for each child in your class

Pencils and paper (optional for younger children: red construction paper, scissors, and markers).

Yellow construction paper, scissors, tape, and markers.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Pop Question

To introduce today's lesson, play a game of "Pop Statement." You will need a balloon and a small piece of paper for each child in your class. Queen Esther was just a regular girl who was suddenly chosen to be queen. Imagine what it would be like to be king or queen. How would you complete the following statements?

Before class, write the statements to be completed on each small slip of paper and insert each one into a balloon. Think of silly statements for the children to complete. Start with, "If I were king or queen I would..."; then finish with an incomplete statement. For example, one might say, "If I were king or queen I would only eat _____ everyday." Use the examples below and/or come up with your own. Give each child a turn. Have them blow up their balloon and then pop it to get their statement. Have them imagine, have fun, and a lot of laughs, then go into today's story.

Here are some question ideas:

“If I were king or queen I would...”

1. Only eat _____ every day.
2. Travel to _____.
3. Pass a law that_____.
4. Buy _____ (number) pairs of shoes.
5. _____ with my leftover food.
6. Help others by _____.
7. Hire _____ (name) as my court jester.

Come up with some more on your own.

LESSON TIME!

Sometimes, we do not understand why things happen in our lives. We do not understand why we must suffer what seems to be misfortune. When our lives are going along smoothly, we do not understand why God allows sudden change to upset our peaceful existence. We are prone to question God for allowing disrupting circumstances. Yet, God has both a reason and a plan. He sees the whole picture.

Esther was a young Jewish girl who lived in Babylon. Her people had been carried away from their homeland of Judah to be slaves in Babylon. Both of her parents had died, and her older cousin adopted and raised her. Esther must have had a very difficult childhood; yet, God had a plan for Esther’s life. There would be a time when her people would be in great danger. God would place Esther in the exact place where He wanted her to be in order to protect His people. God can do amazing things in difficult circumstances through those who will yield to His plan. **God is in control even when we do not understand His plan.**

ESTHER 2:1

After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her.

In chapter one of Esther, the king gave a big party. He wanted his wife, the queen, to come so he could show off her beauty to everyone. She refused to come. This made the king very angry. The king met with his advisors and decided that Vashti would no longer be queen; a new queen would be chosen to replace her.

After the party was over, the king was not angry anymore. He actually became sad about banishing the queen; but by law, he could not go back on his word. He never saw the queen again.

If we do something out of anger, we may come to regret it later. Do not, as did the king, speak or act at a time you are angry; take time to think through what you say or do. Though we do not issue a decree that cannot be changed, we cannot really take back the words we speak carelessly. We may ask for forgiveness; but, the hurt and damage we have caused to another person may remain. In James 1:19, we are exhorted, “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” Weigh carefully your words before you speak them, and harness your anger.

God knew this would happen and would use this event to usher in His plan. God can do all things; He can even move the hearts of kings in order for His plans to be accomplished—even though the king does not fear or serve the Lord. God was already working,

behind the scenes, to provide a way of deliverance for His people. God is in control even when we do not understand His plan.

ESTHER 2:2-4

Then the king's servants who attended him said: "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king;

"and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women's quarters, under the custody of Hegai the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given them.

"Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti." This thing pleased the king, and he did so.

The king's aides made the suggestion that all the beautiful, young girls be brought to the king's harem. The girls were to have beauty treatments to make them ready for the king. The girl who pleased the king the most would be made queen, replacing Vashti. The king liked this suggestion.

ESTHER 2:5-7

In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.

Kish had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

Jerusalem had been destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar, and King Jeconiah and the people of Judah had been carried away as captives to Babylon. One of the Jewish captives was Kish, the great grandfather, of Mordecai—a Jew who resided at the palace.

Now, Mordecai had a beautiful and lovely young cousin named Esther. Esther's parents had died, so Mordecai adopted Esther into his own family and raised her as his own daughter. Mordecai loved Esther and took good care of her though it must have been difficult to grow up without her parents.

ESTHER 2:8-9

So it was, when the king's command and decree were heard, and when many young women were gathered at Shushan the citadel, under the custody of Hegai, that Esther also was taken to the king's palace, into the care of Hegai the custodian of the women.

Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained his favor; so he readily gave beauty preparations to her, besides her allowance. Then seven choice maidservants were provided for her from the king's palace, and he moved her and her maidservants to the best place in the house of the women.

As a result of the king's decree, Esther was taken from her home with Mordecai and brought to the king's harem at Shushan Palace, along with many other young girls. She was entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. Hegai was impressed with Esther, so

he gave her special treatment. He gave her special food, beauty treatments and seven maids from the palace. He also gave her the best place in the harem.

Already God had given Esther favor in the king's palace. Hegai recognized that Esther might very well be the king's choice for a new queen, so he helped to prepare her for that day when she would stand before the king. What a different life it must have been for Esther! All of a sudden she is pampered and given beauty treatments and given servants to attend to her every need. What must have gone through Esther's mind as she was preparing to go before the king? Do you think she may have missed her home, even with all that attention? Do you think she was ever afraid?

Sometimes, we might be afraid when things take a new direction. God may have plans for us that we cannot understand. Like Esther, we must trust Him and know that He is going to work everything out for His good plan and purpose. **God is in control even when we do not understand His plan.**

A "Proverbs 31" Queen

Esther's beauty was not just on the outside; it was on the inside too! She had a lot of good qualities because she loved the Lord.

Have a contest to see which team can find the most "qualities" of a "Proverbs 31 Wife." Split the class into two teams. Have each team turn to Proverbs 31:10-31. Have each team go to a separate part of the room. Give them a piece of paper and a pencil. Have them choose who will keep notes.

Say "go" and give each team three minutes to go through the verses and list all of the qualities or virtues found in the verses. When you say stop, have the children keeping the lists go to the chalkboard and write their answers. You may have to play judge if some are not quite right.

Determine a winner and allow them to serve small prizes to the whole class. Use this exercise to reinforce what true beauty is in the eyes of the Lord.

For younger children who cannot read yet, you will need to do a different activity. You can use some sheets of red construction paper and have the children cut out rubies. Write Proverbs 31:10 on the ruby and explain to the class together what beauty is in God's eyes and how Esther was beautiful.

ESTHER 2:10-11

Esther had not revealed her people or family, for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal it.

And every day Mordecai paced in front of the court of the women's quarters, to learn of Esther's welfare and what was happening to her.

Mordecai had told Esther not to tell anyone that she was a Jew. Since the Jews were still in captivity and were looked down upon, he may have been concerned that she would not be well cared for; so, Esther obeyed and did not tell anyone. Mordecai was concerned for Esther and checked on her everyday.

ESTHER 2:12-14

Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women.

Thus prepared, each young woman went to the king, and she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the women's quarters to the king's palace.

In the evening she went, and in the morning she returned to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who kept the concubines. She would not go in to the king again unless the king delighted in her and called for her by name.

Esther spent a whole year just getting ready to go before the king! Before a young girl was taken to the king, she was to have 12 months of beauty treatments; six months with oil of myrrh to make her skin soft, and 6 months with perfumes and cosmetics to make her attractive.

When it was Esther's turn, she could choose whatever clothes and jewelry she desired. When she returned, she would go to another part of the harem where the king's wives lived. She would live there the rest of her life and would not return to the king again unless he asked for her by name.

ESTHER 2:15-16

Now when the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, to go in to the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her.

So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

The time had finally come to go before the king. When Esther's turn came, she followed the advice of the eunuch in charge of the harem and dressed simply. She was taken to the king at the palace in January of the seventh year of the king's reign.

ESTHER 2:17-18

The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

Then the king made a great feast, the Feast of Esther, for all his officials and servants; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces and gave gifts according to the generosity of a king.

God gave Esther favor. The king loved Esther more than all of the other women. He was delighted with her and set the royal crown on her head. Esther was declared queen. The king had a celebration for all his officials and servants, proclaiming a holiday in the provinces and giving gifts.

When God calls us to do something for Him, He will give us favor. He will open doors and close doors according to His purpose and enable us to do whatever He has called us to do. Esther trusted in God, though she did not know or understand His plan. She will find she is in the right place at the right time; for, in upcoming lessons, we will see that God will use her position as Queen to rescue the Jewish people from great danger.

God had a plan for Esther. God has plans and purposes for our lives, too. Even in the midst of confusing circumstances—when we cannot seem to make sense of what is happening, God is in control; and all things are working together for His good purpose. Let us trust He knows what is best! **God is in control even when we do not understand His plan.**

Crowned With Purpose

For this craft you will need yellow construction paper, scissors, tape, and markers. Give one sheet to each child. Fold the paper in half, length wise, and cut. Place the two strips together and cut one edge in angles to make the top of a crown. Tape the two ends together and help children to determine the size of their head and cut to the appropriate size.

Next decorate the crown by drawing jewels, etc. You may also want to write, "God Has a Plan for Me!" on the crown. When the children are done decorating, tape the ends together and allow them to wear it.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord no matter what the circumstances--even if they do not understand everything that God is doing in their lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.