

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, October 19th, 2014

Passage: Esther

Memory Passage: Esther 4:14

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 1-2.** Ahasuerus (also known by his Greek name Xerxes) reigned as king over Persia from 486-465 BC. According to 1:3 when does our story begin and where does that place the events of Esther in relation to the timeline of Ezra & Nehemiah?
- (b) Why did the king summon Queen Vashti, why did she refuse to appear, and what did that refusal cause the king to do?
- (c) After reading chapter 2, what is your assessment of Esther's actions (i.e. righteous or unrighteous; obedient or disobedient)? How does the Scripture portray Esther's actions?
- (d) Were Esther & Mordecai right or wrong in deciding to keep Esther's nationality a secret? Why?

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 3-4.** What do you learn about Haman in 3:1 that gives you insight into what is about to happen between him and Mordecai (cf. Ex. 17:8-16 & 1 Sam. 15)?
- (b) Was Haman right or wrong to refuse to bow to Haman (bowing was not an act of worship, but a proper show of respect) and what were the consequences of his actions?
- (c) Explain Haman's plan and why "the city of Susa was thrown into confusion."
- (d) What evidence do you see in chapter 4 that proves both Esther & Mordecai had a strong faith in God?

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 5-7.** Why does Esther invite the king and Haman to a 2nd banquet, & how does this add tension to the story?
- (b) According to chapter 6, what event changes the trajectory of our entire story, and in what way does it change it?
- (c) Was what happened to Haman fair or unfair? Was it just or unjust? Why?
- (d) In what ways has Esther changed since we met her in chapter 2?

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 8-10.** Why can't Haman's decree be revoked, and how do the king & Esther get around this?
- (b) Did the Jews act with justice or vengeance toward their enemies, and how do you know?
- (c) From where does the name "Feast of Purim" come, and why do you think it is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture?
- (d) In what ways has Mordecai changed since we met him in chapter 2?

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 1-10.** As you read, notice that God's name is never mentioned! But also, as you read, make a list of all the ways in which God's people assume His presence and willingness to act, and all the ways in which God acts.
- (b) Keeping in mind the main points we have been observing throughout this sermon series, please answer the following questions: (1) How is the war between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent played out in Esther? (2) How have God's people broken His covenant in the book of Esther? (3) How has God been faithful to His covenant in spite of His people's unfaithfulness? (4) In what ways do we see Christ foreshadowed in the book of Esther?

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Surprising Providence