

TOOLS FOR PARENTS



The Story of Esther, Part 3

QUESTIONS FOR CUBS

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

LESSON

God has a plan for our lives

KEY VERSE

**“And those who know Your name will put their trust in You,
For You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.” (Ps. 9:10)**

EAR CHECK (STORY COMPREHENSION)

- Q: What did the king do to allow Esther to approach him?
A: *He extended his sceptre*
- Q: What did Esther invite the king and Haman to?
A: *A banquet*
- Q: The king had trouble doing what?
A: *Sleeping*
- Q: Who did Haman think the king wanted to honour?
A: *Himself*
- Q: Esther revealed to the king that she was a what?
A: *A Jew*

HEART CHECK (SPIRITUAL APPLICATION)

Q: Haman was a truly evil man, and yet he was the second-most powerful man in the kingdom. Does God allow evil people to rise into places of great authority?

A: *Yes, He does. However, remember that nothing is ever out of God's control. Just as it was with Haman, God used an evil person in order to bless those who loved and obeyed Him. Consider Joseph's story. His brothers sold him into slavery, not caring if he lived or died. But God turned this evil situation around and used Joseph to save the people of Egypt from starvation. Incredibly, Joseph was even able to reconcile with his brothers, saying, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Gen. 50:20 NIV). God is truly in control of every situation!*

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Q: If God allows evil men to succeed, then why shouldn't we follow Haman's example and simply repent before we die? We could have everything we want on earth and still go to heaven.

A: Listen carefully to this great truth: All of the material things in the world will not make you happy. Haman's story is an illustration of this truth. He was rich, powerful, and miserable! As Christians, we have a treasure that is worth much more than money or power; we have a rich relationship with Jesus Christ and will spend eternity in heaven. If you are willing to sin and hurt others to get what you want on this earth, you are damaging this precious relationship with Jesus. Worldly pursuits are truly futile (Gal. 6:7-8; Rom. 6:1-2, 22-23).

"I" CHECK (PERSONAL APPLICATION)

1. Mordecai told Esther not to tell anyone she was a Jew. Why did this turn out to be good advice? In general, do you think Christians should be open about their beliefs? Have you ever been afraid of telling someone that you are a Christian? Why?
2. Staci noted that God was present in the story, even through the dark times. Looking at your own life, can you remember any specific times that God has been with you through difficult situations?
3. Some scholars argue that the book of Esther does not belong in the Bible because it doesn't mention the name of God. Others argue that even though He isn't named, God's "fingerprints" are evident throughout the story. Do you think the book of Esther belongs in the Bible? How do you think God was involved in the story?
4. Esther realized that she became queen "for such a time as this," and she willingly allowed herself to be used by God. Are you ready to be used by God to play a part in His plan? How would you respond if God's plan took you to another country or put you in a difficult situation? Would you be willing to go?

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

In the final part of Esther's story, I wanted to emphasize the folly of Haman's wickedness. He is unbelievably powerful, equally self-centred, and vicious beyond all reason when slighted. He seems like a character written for a melodrama, but he was very real. He is nothing more and nothing less than the obvious result of what happens if we place ourselves on the throne of our lives instead of at the throne of God. Haman was unusual in that he had more wealth and power than most of us will ever wield, but even with all of his advantages, he was still a small and wretched man.

I grew up watching *The Twilight Zone* with my older brother. This television series from the 1960s was certainly not deliberately Christian in its perspective, but it was very moral in nature. It specialized in stories that taught a specific, moral lesson, and most of them ended with a bitter irony. For instance, one of the stories followed a rather unsuccessful comic. His one and only wish was to make people laugh. Mysteriously, he suddenly received his wish. Whenever he told a joke, everyone laughed hysterically. The irony of the situation came when he could no longer talk to anyone without making them laugh hysterically. His wish became his own personal source of unending torture.

When I look at Haman's story, I instinctively think, "This is a Twilight Zone episode." Haman realized his wishes for power and wealth, but instead of receiving what he saw as his crowning glory, his wishes became the tools of his torture and destruction. This is a profound concept to ponder. Our deepest wishes apart from God can easily become the greatest sources of pain in our lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David B. Carl'.

David B. Carl
Creative Director
Paws & Tales

