

Esther Saves Her People

Esther 8:1-17

MEMORY VERSE

PROVERBS 11:10

“When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; and when the wicked perish, there is jubilation.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Two bean bags for this game and four sheets of various colors of construction paper.

A bag of ring pops to use as signet rings, paper, and crayons or markers.

Strips of various colored card stock paper approximately 1/2” wide, markers, glitter, small “precious stones.”

ATTENTION GETTER!

Messengers of the Good News!

Today, we will learn about a proclamation of good news for the Jews. Their lives were going to be saved from the wicked plan of Haman. Is it not wonderful that someone shared with us the good news of salvation in Jesus? Satan wants to destroy us, but Jesus has provided salvation for all who believe on Him. Use this game to introduce today’s lesson and theme.

You will need 2 beanbags for this game and four sheets of various colored construction paper. Tape the construction paper to each corner of your room. Split your class in half. Have the children line up on opposite sides of the room against the wall. The object of the game will be to have one child at a time take the message (bean bag) to the four corners of the room (can represent the four corners of the world) and tag each corner. After tagging all four corners, the child will hand the bean bag to the person in the front of the line, go to the end of the line, and sit down. The person at

the front of the line will take the message to the four corners and, then, pass it on to the next person. Declare the team a winner when all children have taken a turn and are sitting down.

With purpose, passion, and a sense of urgency, let us take the good news of the Gospel to the four corners of the world as Jesus commanded!

LESSON TIME!

Esther chose to yield her life to God's purposes, and God used her in a mighty way—to deliver the whole Jewish population that had been sentenced to death. Let's consider the godly characteristics of Esther—one who God used as a leader in accomplishing His will.

1. Esther disciplined herself to be obedient to authorities in her life (Esther 2:8-9, 20).
2. She had God's call upon her life (Esther 4:13, 14).
3. Esther trusted God's promises for her life (Esther 4:14-16).
4. God gave Esther His instructions (Esther 2:22, 4:8-14).
5. She accepted God's will (Esther 4:16).
6. She was confident of God's providence and help (Esther 4:15,16).
7. She was able to stir her people to fasting and prayer as she herself set the example of fasting (Esther 4:15,16).
8. She considered the timing of her actions (Esther 5:1-8).
9. Her influence was unusual for a woman of her time.
10. She wrote an edict that was entered in official records (Esther 9:29, 32).
11. Esther was courageous and self-sacrificing (Esther 5:16).

Esther was quite an example to follow for those of us who seek to live our lives in a way that will please God. In today's lesson, Esther will again demonstrate courage and self sacrifice. You may remember from our last lesson, God's people in Persia have a big problem. The king's decree which gave permission to the people of Persia to destroy the Jews on a certain day—the thirteenth day of the twelfth month—could not be reversed, even by the king himself! It was law.

ESTHER 8:1-2

On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her.

So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman.

King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman to Esther. Note, Haman is referred to as the “Jews’ enemy.” What a sad legacy! As the Jews enemy, he had become God’s enemy. Zechariah 2:8 tells us, “For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.’”

It was the custom that the properties of a traitor, in this case Haman, became the property of the king. King Ahasuerus gave the confiscated property to Queen Esther as restitution for the offence against her. Not only was Mordecai’s life saved from Haman’s wrath, when the king gave Mordecai his signet ring, it indicated he was promoted as Haman’s successor in the court.

Esther put Mordecai in charge of Haman's estate, which made Mordecai wealthy. Haman's attempt to kill Mordecai led to Mordecai's exaltation and Haman's own destruction. The Bible says, "And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12). **God protects His people.**

ESTHER 8:3-6

Now Esther spoke again to the king, fell down at his feet, and implored him with tears to counteract the evil of Haman the Agagite, and the scheme which he had devised against the Jews.

And the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king,

and said, "If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight and the thing seems right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.

"For how can I endure to see the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?"

Esther again boldly approached the king who held out the golden scepter. (Esther, once more, endangered her life; remember, if the king does not hold out the golden scepter, an uninvited guest will be put to death.) Esther's life and Mordecai's life had been spared, but Esther was concerned for the lives of her people who remained sentenced to death by the king's decree. She pleaded to the king, imploring him to take away Haman's wicked decree against the

Jews in the kingdom and, thus, spare their lives. What a beautiful picture is created as Queen Esther identifies herself with her people, showing her love for them. “For how can I endure to see the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?”

What an example of love! The Bible says, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13). Jesus loves us that way! The Bible says the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to repentance. God does not want to see anyone die and spend eternity in hell. Roman 5:7,8 states, “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” We were all under a death sentence. God provided forgiveness and redemption through faith in Jesus Christ. Have you received His gift of grace?

ESTHER 8:7-14

Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he tried to lay his hand on the Jews.

"You yourselves write a decree concerning the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke."

So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven

provinces in all, to every province in its own script, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language.

And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds.

By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives; to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions,

on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province and published for all people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

The couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Shushan the citadel.

By law, the king could not revoke his edict. However, nothing could prevent him from making a new law. The king gave Esther and Mordecai the permission and responsibility to create a new law; and he would approve it with his seal.

Now, there would now be a second law that would be as strong as the first one, but would turn the whole situation around. The new law gave the Jewish people the right to arm and protect themselves and nine months to prepare themselves. Now, the people of the land would understand that the king did not want the Jews to be harmed. **God protects His people.**

Warren Wiersbe gives a beautiful illustration of this act; “Can you see here an illustration of how God saved the sinner from his plight? You were under condemnation because of the law of sin and death. God did not revoke that law - He obeyed it! He sent His Son to die for our sins and to bring in ‘the law of the Spirit of life’ (Romans 8:2). Any sinner who believes the message and trusts the Savior will receive everlasting life (John 3:15-16).”

Sealed by the Holy Spirit

You will need a bag of Ring Pops (candies that resemble rings with large gems on them) to use as signet rings, paper, and crayons or markers. Have the team that won the “Messengers” game serve the ring pops to the rest of the class. Use this opportunity to discuss with the class what the Bible talks about concerning “seals.” You can use the following definition taken from the Holman Bible Dictionary to help you explain what seals are and what they were used for in Bible times.

SEAL - A signet containing a distinctive mark which stood for the individual who owned it. The earliest seals found so far date to before 3000 B.C. Seals varied in shapes and sizes. Some were round and were worn around the neck. Others were rings worn on the finger. The mark was made by stamping the seal into soft clay. Many cylinder seals have been found which contain scenes that communicate a message. These were rolled in the clay to form the impression. Tamar asked for Judah’s signet as collateral on a pledge he made (Gen. 38:18). Joseph was given pharaoh’s

ring when he was placed in command of the country (Gen. 41:42), symbolizing Joseph's right to act with the ruler's authority. Jezebel used Ahab's seal to sign letters asking that Naboth be tried and stoned to death (1 Kings 21:8).

Have the children take a piece of paper and markers and allow them to design their own seal. They might use the initials in their name or something that would describe what is important to them.

After drawing their seal, have the children look up (or you can read to them) 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and Ephesians 1:13-14. Talk about how we have been "sealed" by the Holy Spirit and what that means to us as Christians.

ESTHER 8:15-17

So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor.

And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

Mordecai, dressed in royal attire, receives a joyful welcome from the city of Shushan from both the Gentiles and Jews. God exalted Mordecai to a position he did not seek. The Bible says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (James

4:10). Psalm 75:6,7 states, “For exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one and exalts another.”

Now, the Jews are rejoicing; what a contrast to their reaction when they heard the first decree of death! As the people around them saw how they had been delivered, many of them “became” Jews. They were converted! While under Haman’s decree, it was dangerous to be a Jew; under Mordecai’s decree, it was no longer a danger, but a desire to many.

God had delivered His people. He had worked behind the scenes. He used willing vessels to accomplish His purposes and plans—Esther and Mordecai. Once, again God’s heart of love and desire to work on behalf of His people was beautifully displayed. **God protects His people.**

King Size Rings

In this craft, the children will make signet rings out of card stock paper. You will need strips of card stock paper approximately 3/4” wide. The paper should be various colors. Using different colors of card stock or construction paper, have the children cut out shapes for their signet rings and then decorate as they please. (They can duplicate their design from the last activity if they would like). You may want to provide glitter or plastic gems. Glue the shape or signet onto the band. Have the children wrap the band around their finger and help them cut it to the size of their finger. Using a glue stick or white glue (allow time for drying if using white glue), glue band together at the end.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of trust to commit to the Lord anything that might make the children afraid, knowing that God will always protect His people. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

