

Challenging Choices

Esther 2:19-23; 3; 4; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 600, 601

Have you ever been in a situation in which you did not know what to do? Queen Esther was. Read on to find out what she did.

Mordecai was happy that Esther became queen. But he still did not want her to tell others that she was a Jew.

One day when he was sitting at the palace gate, Mordecai heard two guards talking. They were angry with the king and were planning to kill him! Mordecai told Esther, who told the king. King Xerxes investigated Mordecai's report. It was true! The guards were arrested and hanged. All of this was written in the daily court record.

About the same time, King Xerxes made Haman his second in command. King Xerxes

ordered that everyone should bow down to Haman when they saw him. And everyone did, except Mordecai. One day Haman noticed that Mordecai did not bow to him. He became very angry. Haman knew Mordecai was a Jew. He began thinking about ways to destroy Mordecai—and all other Jews.

Haman decided to tell the king that a certain group of people were causing trouble, and that they should be destroyed. He said he would pay the people who destroyed them. He did not tell the king that the people were Jews.

"Keep the money," the king said to Haman. "And do with the people as you please." (See Esther 3:11.)

When Mordecai heard the order, he put on rough clothes. He covered himself with ashes and cried at the city gate. Esther's servants told her how Mordecai was dressed. She sent good clothes for him to wear, but he refused to put them on.

Esther sent Hathach, her servant, to talk to Mordecai. Mordecai told him everything that had happened. He gave Hathach a copy of the order for Esther. Mordecai told him to ask Esther to go to the king and beg for mercy. Hathach



The Message

God helps me
accept everyone.

Memory Verse

“People look at the
outward appearance,
but the LORD looks at
the heart”

(1 Samuel 16:7, NIV).

hurried to give Esther the message.

Esther sent a message back to Mordecai. “Nobody may go to the king’s throne room without being called. If anyone goes and the king holds out his gold scepter, that person may live. But if the king doesn’t, that person dies. And I haven’t been called to go to the king for 30 days.”

Mordecai answered, “Just because you live in the king’s palace, don’t think that people won’t soon know you are a Jew. You can’t escape. If you remain silent, help will come another way. But you and the rest of our family will all die. And who knows, you may have been chosen

to be queen to save us at this terrible time.”

Esther sent one final message to Mordecai, “Get all the Jews in Susa together. Tell them not to eat or drink anything for three days and nights. My servants and I will do the same.



Then, even though it’s against the law, I will go to the king. And if I die, I die.”

What will happen to Esther? Will she die? We will learn more next week.



While they were in captivity, the Jews began worshipping together in synagogues (church buildings).

S A B B A T H

- DO** If possible, go for a walk with your family. How many different types of flowers and trees can you see?
- READ** Find a quiet place and read the lesson story together.
- PRAY** Thank God for all the different things that He has made.

S U N D A Y

- DO** Cut out a heart and write your memory verse on it. Hang it where you can see it. During worship today, teach the memory verse to your family.
- DO** Make a list of family differences (color of people's eyes, hair, shoe size, and height). Write a poem about differences and share it with your family.
- PRAY** Thank God for your family.

M O N D A Y

- READ** During worship today, find out as much as you can about gates to cities in Bible times.
- ASK** Ask an adult to help you find another Old Testament story where someone was sitting at the city gate. Why did cities have gates?
- DRAW** Draw a picture of a modern gate and what the gate to Xerxes' palace may have looked like.
- PRAY** Thank God for His protection.

T U E S D A Y

- READ** With your family, look up Acts 10:34, 35. Who in the New Testament had to learn to accept people even though they were different? If you have difficulty in accepting someone, ask Jesus to help you accept them now.
- DO** Think of a tune or make up a tune so you can sing the memory verse.
- DO** If possible, plan to visit a maze this week. Or make a maze for your family. A maze is difficult because everything looks the same.

W E D N E S D A Y

- SHARE** Read and discuss Esther 2:21-23 during family worship. Mordecai overheard two guards plotting to kill the king. Who guards your country's leader?
- DO** Sit in a circle. Whisper something to the person next to you and have them whisper it to the next person. Go around the circle. Was the message the same when it came back to you?
- THINK** What should you do if you hear two friends talking about someone else? Review your memory verse.
- PRAY** Ask Jesus to help you to listen only to good things about others.

T H U R S D A Y

THINK In Esther's time laws were made by the king. How are laws made where you live?

READ During worship, ask: What special laws did God give us? Read Exodus 20 together. Discuss: Why did God give us laws? How do they make us happy?

THINK Mordecai could not meet with Esther when she became queen. How many different ways could they have sent messages to each other?

THINK What ways can you communicate with a friend who lives in another part of town?

PRAY Thank God for all the ways we can communicate, and that He is only a prayer away.

F R I D A Y

DO For family worship today, act out the lesson story. Include Mordecai at the gate, Haman going to the king, and Esther and Mordecai's reaction when they learn of the decree.

DO Say your memory verse song together.

DO Discuss ways your family cares about one another.

PRAY Thank God for your family.

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PUZZLE

Directions: Answer the following questions. To find out the answers, use the code grid. Locate the number on the side and then count the numbers across to determine which letter to write on the line provided in the puzzle.

1. _____ heard two angry guards

3.5 3.7 4.5 1.7 2.5 1.6 1.5 2.7

plan to kill the king.

2. It was against the law for _____ to go to the

2.5 4.6 4.7 2.6 2.5 4.5

king without an invitation.

3. _____ was second in command to King Xerxes.

2.6 1.5 3.5 1.5 3.6

4. _____'s servant, _____, spoke

2.5 4.6 4.7 2.6 2.5 4.5

2.6 1.5 4.7 2.6 1.5 1.6 2.6

with _____.

3.5 3.7 4.5 1.7 2.5 1.6 1.5 2.7

1	A	C	D
2	E	H	I
3	M	N	O
4	R	S	T
	5	6	7