

# Bible Studies for Life: June 25

*Mordecai and Esther • Esther 2:5-7; 4:8-17*

*By Don Hicks*



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This was a time of terrible threat to all of God's chosen people. Haman, the highest official in the king's court, saw that Mordecai was not bowing to him and not showing him the respect he demanded because of his greatly elevated opinion of himself.

"He [Haman] was filled with rage. And when he learned of Mordecai's ethnic identity, it seemed repugnant to Haman to do away with Mordecai alone. He planned to destroy all of Mordecai's people, the Jews" (Esther 3:6 CSB).

Mordecai sent a message to Esther who was now queen because she had won the beauty contest to succeed Queen Vashti. The Bible tells us Esther "had a beautiful figure and was extremely good-looking" (Esther 2:7 CSB). This was enough to get her into the king's harem where she was being prepared to meet the King under the supervision of Hegai, keeper of the women.

"The young woman [Esther] pleased him [Hegai] and gained his favor so that he accelerated the process of the beauty treatments and the special diet that she received. He assigned seven hand-picked female servants to her from the palace and transferred her and her servants to the harem's best quarters" (Esther 2:9 CSB).

One of the ways Mordecai had mentored Esther just before she was entered in the beauty contest was telling her not to disclose her family heritage to anyone. This warning was necessary because women were subject to any desire or whim of

their husband whether logical or reasonable.

The beauty contest for queen was going on because Queen Vashti had been removed for resisting the king's whimsical order for her to show her beauty to his drunken guests at a festival.

Hegai, keeper of the women, was impressed with Esther and sent her to the king's chambers. The King was very taken with the beautiful Esther. As a matter of fact:

*The king loved Esther more than all the other women. She won more favor and approval from him than did any of the other virgins. He placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti. The king held a great banquet for all his officials and staff. It was Esther's banquet (Esther 2:17-18 CSB).*

Being the queen of an eastern despot is not ever a very secure spot. To understand this insecurity, begin by remembering the former Queen Vashti. Also, a factor to remember is the depth of commitment the king had to a relationship built on physical beauty found in a beauty contest.

This tenuous relationship (with its inherent danger) was explained by Esther to Mordecai when he asks her to approach the king without waiting for his invitation.

Esther sent this message to Mordecai as he was waiting on the king's front porch:

*All the royal officials and the people of the royal provinces know that one law applies to every man or woman who approaches the king in the inner courtyard and who has not been summoned – the death penalty – unless the king extends the gold scepter, allowing the person to live (Esther 4:11 CSB).*

Mordecai warned her immediately to protect her and all the Jewish people:

*Mordecai told the messenger to reply to Esther, 'Don't think*

*that you will escape the fate of all the Jews because you are the King's palace. If you keep silent at this time, deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place, but you and your father's family will be destroyed (Esther 4:13-14 CSB).*

*Quickly, Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: Go and assemble all the Jews who can be found in Susa and fast for me... I will go to the king even if it is against the law. If I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16 CSB).*

Esther put on her best royal clothes and approached the king. The King raised his gold scepter immediately as soon as he saw his much loved queen. Esther was safe in God's care and the Jewish community, including Mordecai, was saved.

God's enemy, Haman, was hanged on the 75-foot high gallows that he had built to hang Mordecai, Esthers' mentor and father.

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