

The Providence of God: A Study of the book of Esther

Chapter 5 - Study Questions

“While Esther has all the ingredients for a good story, what makes it even more fascinating is that it is a book of the Bible, which means it is a book “breathed” by God – inspired, recorded, and preserved for eternity. A divine work ordained by the One and Only True God. And because of that, Esther has a purpose beyond being simply a fascinating story...As it says in Romans 15:4, (this) was written for your instruction – so that you might have encouragement and hope for your life.” (Precepts)

- Begin with prayer – ask the Spirit of God to lead you into all truth and to use His Word to help you know Him better and to understand His ways.
- Read Esther chapter 5. (Suggestion: print out the chapter on a separate piece of paper. This may be helpful as you observe, mark, and take notes.) Have fun digging into the precious Truth that is God’s Word!

Observation:

1. Get the facts:
 - a) **Who** are the main characters in Esther chapter 5? Describe these characters.
 - b) **What** is happening? (Main events)
 - c) **Where?** Does the chapter indicate where the events are happening?
 - d) **When?** Any references to time?
2. Take note of repeated words/phrases. If it is helpful, mark or color code them. (Words and phrases are repeated because they are important!) List some of the words and phrases you’ve seen repeated throughout chapters 1-5.
3. In one phrase or sentence, summarize the main event of each paragraph in Esther chapter 5. This will help you determine the overall theme of the chapter.

5:1-4

5:5-8

5:9-14

Interpretation: (Using your paragraph summaries and observations, determine the subject, theme and purpose of this chapter.)

Subject: (What is the author’s general topic?)

Theme: (What specifically about the subject is being discussed?)

Purpose: (This is the purpose the Holy Spirit had in mind when He inspired the passage. Ask yourself, *why is this in the Bible?*)

***To help you determine the subject, theme, and purpose of this text, **ask questions of the text.**

Below are some examples to help you start:

4. Describe Esther's approach to the king, and his response.
5. "An edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring cannot be revoked" (8:8). What potential options and risks did Esther face in talking to the king about the edict written by Haman?
6. What was Esther's first request, and what does it tell you about her character and approach to the king?
7. What do you discern about the king from his response?
8. What was Esther's second request as her guests enjoyed after-dinner wine, and what does it reveal about her plan for her people?
9. How would the king's acceptance of the invitation assure her he would do whatever she asked? (See also 7:2.)
10. Describe Haman's fluctuating emotions as he left the feast.
11. How did Haman boost his ego after being humiliated again by Mordecai's refusal to rise or tremble with fear before him? What does the size of the gallows (50 cubits, which roughly 75 feet) reveal about Haman's hatred of Mordecai?
12. Think about what you've observed as you've watched the interaction of the king, Esther, and Haman. What can we learn from the behavior of these people?
 - a. How does Esther handle the situation? Does the character of this woman change under pressure? Think about how she behaves before the king and what she does when she sees the man who's behind the death sentence of her people. What can you learn from her?
 - b. It's been thirty-three days since the king and Esther have been with one another. How does the king interact with her? Look at verses 2-6. Don't miss the expression of time in verse 5. What does this tell you?
 - c. What do you learn about Haman? Think about the character of this man. This is the man who has the seal of the king, who makes decisions for him! What kind of man is this? What lurks in his heart? How deep does his anger go? What does it do to him? What are his wife and friends like? How do they impact him? Was their advice good for him? Can a person's friends make a difference? (see Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33) What are your thoughts?

Application:

13. Esther faced great risk in talking to the king about the edict Haman had written. She might have been tempted to turn away from this responsibility and let someone else step in on

behalf of her people. In what ways are you tempted to turn away from what God has called you to do? What are the dangers of yielding to the temptation?

14. What principles of wisdom can you learn from Esther's behavior? What can you do today to make these principles a part of your behavior?
15. What do you learn from Haman about pride, desire for recognition, and anger? In what ways are you tempted as Haman was? What are the dangers if you yield to the temptation?
16. Consider the invisible hand of God at work in the events of this chapter. How does this encourage you in your life right now?