

# *Choices: Esther*

## His choice

I find that in every Bible book I look at has tremendous choices. It would be so easy to take a hard look at Esther's choices because this is her story. Instead. What jumped out to me is the choices of three other characters in this small book. Esther herself has several choices to make. Each one is a step closer to saving her people. The amazing part is in most of these decisions she does not know the outcome. I wonder if choices are all about baby steps to a much grander goal. A goal that we may never know about but always want: peace, health, and safety.

Our first character is King Ahasuerus. As this story opens he appears to be reckless and a drunkard. He boasted about his kingdom. The King displayed all his power and wealth that spread over 127 provinces. This was a grand affair that lasted a half a year. I am going to surprise some and say that his choice was to honor rather than boast. The reason a say that is because he brought all the leaders together for a great banquet. He told all his servants to let these people do as they pleased. This was his tribute to them more than himself.

I feel that if he wanted to rule and lord his power over them then why the banquet giving them tons of drink and food. Where is the tribute to Ahasuerus? Where is the bowing down, gifts, and paying money tributes? Sure, maybe that did happen but it does not look this way. I think the King loved to be loved, yet I feel he loved others as well. His first choice in my mind is that he chose to put the kingdom first over himself. He honored the community that kept the peace.

I guess the second choice is interesting. King Ahasuerus wanted his Queen to bless the party by showing her beauty. I bet she was less than enthusiastic about parading around in their drunken state. I bet she had seen this thing before. Stunning the Kings court, she refused his

request. Still I think this King was about honor. He could have killed the queen. He could have tossed her out. Instead he brooded for several days and consulted his wise men. He was a traditional and structured king. There was great fear that these actions by the Queen could embarrass the kingdom. In the end, it says in the beginning of chapter two that he remembered the Queen and his attendants were concerned for him. This King was able to be calm, patient, and honoring. He let the Queen go. I just get the feeling he was kind and friendly more than violent and a dictator. This choice to rule justly will be played out in the rest of the story. Do you honor others? It's a choice.

## Our choice

What a fascinating book. This book of Esther tells an interesting tale of deception and intrigue. The father of Esther is Mordechai and he is of Jewish decent. The Kingdom does not know that Esther is Jewish too. She has been elevated to queen in the place of Vashti. A villain is introduced that is an Agagite. He is a descendant from a people that got virtually wiped out during the reign of King Saul. You see, Saul was ordered by God to kill all the evil Agagite people. They were not a good nation but Saul spared some of the women and children. Hundreds of years later Haman found a way to avenge his people for the slaughter.

Our second character making choices is Mordechai the Jew. His first choice was asking his adopted daughter Esther to be quiet about her heritage. Why is this a choice? Well if you read this book you will notice that information to and from the King and the common people was sparse. The King did not know information without his advisors telling him. I suppose he never ventured into the common world. On the other side the common people could not see the king

without being called. Mordechai's silence was important because he now had a voice and ear on the inside: Esther.

All trade, debate, and even law transactions came through a place called the Kings gate. Rumors and information was passed in this area. Mordechai listened to all of it ever day. One day he heard of a plot to kill the King. In those days kings were killed all the time. It's probably because of the lack of communication from common place to king. Mordechai was able to rely the information to Esther who in turn gave it to the king. Mordechai's silence and patience payed off. He could have been a rebel or ignored his good fortune through Esther but instead he waited and acted with the best intent.

One other choice was to reveal himself during a crisis. He was willing to put himself in harms way for his people. He learned that Haman was going to kill all the Jewish people. I said the King made good choices but he did have one downfall: Drink and disconnection with the outside world. Haman took advantage of this to avenge his agate heritage against the Jews. Esther 3:14 says **“for a time such as this.”** It was Mordechai and Esther's time to reveal their heritage to save their people. Mordechai's choices to act and not act until a certain time saved their people as this story concludes. Do you always need to act? It's a choice.

### Lesson learned

The third person in this story has choices too: it's Haman the Agagite. There are people that have good reasons to hate another person's nationality. The native nations in North America certainly have been abused and killed by the White governments of the past. These people might have a reason to hate. The Armenians experienced genocide against them in Turkey. Some groups never forget the past. Haman knew his past but the real act of terror was many

generations before. The first choice of Haman was to let his anger burn against an act he had never witnessed.

I realize you might be angry over an injustice. You might have hard feeling towards a group of evil doers. I get it. Still, why did God ask us not to let our anger burn? I think it's because with anger we make mistakes. Haman was so focused on his own respect and honor that he became too focused on his choice to be bitter. The second choice of Haman was his pride. We all want to be loved. At times we call someone the short man syndrome. It's a derogatory statement but in some cases it is true. A man of little stature tries to overrule an area because he feels the need to compensate for his lack of height. I feel that something forced Haman to dwell on being honored and slighted at the same time. I feel he overcompensated to fuel his pride.

Haman's choices so far have fueled his mistakes. In a way he could not see the real issues. He must have known that Mordechai had saved the King. He must have known that plots were being thought of against the King. Maybe he thought in all his pomp and status that he might be able to take over. These choices of Haman slowly did him in. Have you dwelled too much on the past? Have you spent way too much time thinking about the future. Being mindful of the here and now might serve you better.

This story concludes with Haman building his own gallows. Haman began boasting but ended by being humiliated by his own smugness. Choices must have motives. Haman was consumed with past motives. He was consumed with pride and assumptions. He played the King to gain favor. Esther put herself in harms way with the King to gain favor. Mordechai waited for the right time to gain favor with the King. In the end he got that favor through the willing sacrifice of a daughter. Haman became a sacrifice while trying to kill the Jews. Our choices and motives can look like gold or like Haman's. How do your choices look this week?