

Church of God Sunday School

ESTHER CHOSEN AS QUEEN

Esther 1-2

When King Ahasuerus (uh-haz'yoo-EE-ruhs) became the King of Persia, he ruled "from India even unto Ethiopia," over 127 provinces, or districts. During his third year as king, he hosted a banquet for all his princes, nobles, and important army leaders. This banquet lasted 180 days.

When that banquet was over, King Ahasuerus held another banquet. That banquet was just for the important men in the palace, from the least to the greatest. At the same time, Queen Vashti (VASH-tye) held a banquet for the women, in the royal house of the king.

On the seventh day of the king's last banquet, after he had had too much to drink, King Ahasuerus commanded his seven chamberlains to bring Queen Vashti to him. The king wanted to show his guests how beautiful she was. But Queen Vashti did not want to come and have her beauty seen by all the men of Shushan (SHOO-shan). It was against the customs of her people. So when Queen Vashti heard the summons, she refused to come.

King Ahasuerus became angry at Queen Vashti. He talked to his royal advisors about the queen's disobedience. They advised him to choose another woman to take Vashti's place as queen. They said if all the women in the kingdom heard how Queen Vashti had disrespected and disobeyed the king's command, then they, too, would feel free to disrespect and disobey their own husbands.

The king forbade Vashti to ever come into his presence again, and he sent letters into all the provinces, stating that every man was to bear rule over his own household. Then, he appointed officers to go and gather the most beautiful, young, unmarried women in his kingdom and bring them all to the palace, to the house of the women. There the women would live and

learn the social court life and the manners of a queen. In time they would all come to see the king, but only one would be chosen to be the new queen.

At that time, in Shushan, where the palace was, there was a Jew named Mordecai (MOR-duh-kye). Mordecai had been carried away from Jerusalem during the captivity of the Jews. He had raised his young cousin from a child, after the death of her parents. He loved her as he would a daughter. His cousin's name was Hadassah (hud-DAS-uh), or Esther. Esther was a beautiful young woman now.



When Mordecai heard of the king's decree, he had to send Esther to join the rest of the young maidens who were gathering at the palace. But Mordecai had told Esther not to let it be known that she was a Jewish girl.

Each of the many young women who were brought to the palace had to spend one year in purification and preparations to go before King Ahasuerus.

When Hegai (hay-GAY), the keeper of the women, met Esther, he was pleased with her. He quickly supplied her with everything she needed for her purification. He also gave her the best place in the house of the women.

Every day Mordecai walked by the court of the women, because he was concerned about the welfare of Esther.

When Esther's turn came to go to the king, King Ahasuerus had already seen many young women. None had pleased him yet. But God gave Esther grace and favor in the king's sight. King Ahasuerus fell in love with Esther. He chose her to be his queen. He placed the crown on her head and made a feast for her. The king gave out gifts and published the news that Esther was his new queen. But Queen Esther told no one she was a Jewess.

After those things happened, Mordecai did not walk before the court of the women. He sat in the king's gate as a watchman. During that time, Mordecai overheard two of the king's servants talking. They were angry at the king over something, angry enough that they had made plans to kill him! Mordecai let Queen Esther know of their plans. She sent word to the king about the men's wicked plot, but she gave Mordecai all the credit for finding out about it. After the king had searched the matter thoroughly, both men were hung.

All of this was written in the book of chronicles. This was a record book of what happened to the king,

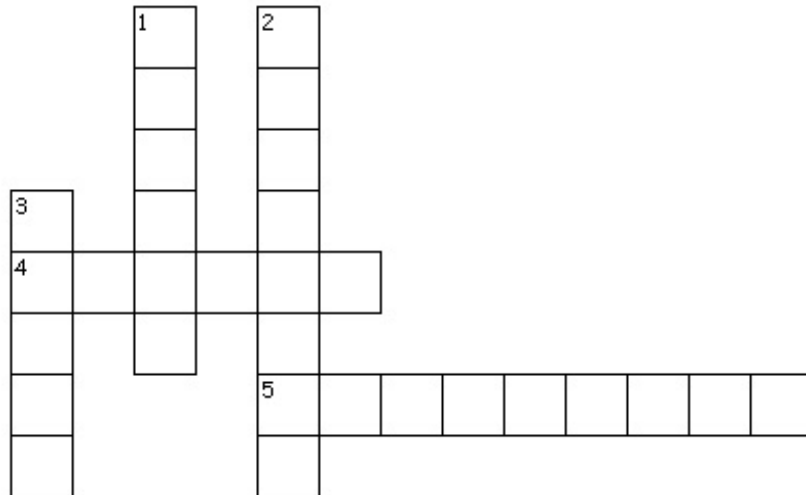
or the history of his kingship. However, King Ahasuerus soon forgot what Mordecai had done for him. He did not know that Mordecai the Jew was Esther's relative. Esther still kept her word to Mordecai and did not tell anyone that she was a Jewess.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

—1 Peter 5:6

Esther Becomes Queen



Across

- 4. another name for Hadassah
- 5. King of Persia

Down

- 1. the Queen who disobeyed
- 2. Esther's cousin
- 3. the keeper of the women



Queen Esther

