

Lesson 12: Upsetting the Balance Esther 3-8

1. Read Esther 3-8. Use your outline to make notes and comments for class discussions.
2. Read Lesson 12 in your books.
3. Answer questions in Dimension 1.
4. Consider the following questions:
 - a. In Esther 3, we encounter Haman. If Haman the Agagite is a descendant of King Agag (see 1 Samuel 15) and the hated Amalekites, what does that mean for the Israelites? How is King Saul's failure to extinguish all the Amalekites coming back, 500 years later, to haunt Israel?
 - b. In Esther 4, Mordecai persuades Esther to help. Mordecai's crying and penitence (Esther 4:1-3) were culturally accepted. As for Esther, what options are open to her as queen? As a Jew? At what cost?
 - c. In Esther 4:15-16, Esther calls for a fast. What does fasting involve? Where is God in this?
 - d. In Esther 4, Esther decides to risk her life and break the law by approaching the king uninvited to ask for help. Can you imagine a crisis in which you would go "against the law," as Esther does, to find a solution?
 - e. In Esther 5, King Xerxes offers Esther anything she asks. In John 14:13, God promises to give us anything we ask for. What does the passage in John 14:13 mean? What assurances do you have that when you ask God for something, it will be granted?
 - f. In Esther 6, the king honors Mordecai. Haman unknowingly plays a part in determining what Honor Mordecai receives. What do Haman's pride and racial hatred bring him? What is the object lesson here for church leaders? For yourself?
 - g. Although Esther 7 ends with Haman's death, what issues remain unresolved?
 - h. In Esther 8, King Xerxes issues an edict in behalf of the Jews. If you were in a position to destroy your enemy without fear of the consequences to you, would you take advantage of the situation? Why or why not?