

## The Book of Esther

# 24

## Morning Devotions

Select a passage in God's Word. Talk with the Lord as you read the passage, then go back and find one or two verses which the Lord has impressed on your heart and meditate on them.

## Morning Study

This morning we read the book of **Esther**. This is the last of the historical books of the Old Testament – a narrative chain that traces the story of mankind (and, in particular, of Israel) from creation to the end of the Jewish exile.

The book of **Esther** has had a chequered career regarding its inclusion in the canon of the Old Testament. Many Jewish scholars rejected it as inspired by God for one very simple reason – there is not one mention of God in the whole of the narrative of **Esther** (save where God may be referred to indirectly in the fasting of **4:3,16**).

But others point out that the author of the book may have left out any direct reference to God as a deliberate literary device designed, paradoxically, to bring the sovereignty of God into stark relief. For the theme of God's sovereignty is woven deeply into the story of **Esther**.

The author of **Esther** mostly likely wrote the book some years after the events he recorded, but probably before the Greek conquest of Persia. There are strong indications that the author was a resident of Susa (the capital of Persia) and that he wrote for those still in exile in Persia.

The author's primary aim is to explain the origins of the Festival of Purim (**3:7; 9:24,28-32**) and also to record the deliverance of the exiled Jews from the hands of their archenemy, Haman.

**Esther** is the story of a remarkable heroine, one who was raised by God in order to bring deliverance to the Jews. In the providence of her position as Queen of the Persian Empire, we see the remarkable sovereignty of God at work behind the scenes of world history.

With this in mind, let's now pull up a comfortable chair and read the entire book of **Esther** in one sitting.

# Memory Verse

As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion  
a stone that causes men to stumble and  
a rock that makes them fall, and the one  
who trusts in him will never  
be put to shame.”

Romans 9:33

Here are a few suggestions that may help you to memorize your memory verse:

- ➡ Ask the Lord to help you remember his Word (see [John 14:26](#)).
- ➡ Use the version of the Bible you are most familiar with. What you normally read in your Bible is what you need to be memorizing.
- ➡ Don't just memorize the contents of the verse; memorize its “address” (the verse reference) as well. You can do this by following this pattern: Step 1: **reference**; Step 2: **verse content**; Step 3: **reference**. Then repeat steps 1-3. Note that you are quoting the reference twice as many times as you quote the actual verse content. This gives the verse a clear “reference tag.”
- ➡ After you have read your memory verse out aloud several times, try going through your memory verse *without* reading your computer screen.
- ➡ Look up your memory verse in your Bible. Look at its immediate context and read the verses that come before and after your memory verse.
- ➡ Print out your memory verse or jot it down on a piece of paper. Take this paper with you when you go to work or do other daily activities. Meditate on the meaning of the verse throughout the day.
- ➡ During your noon appointment with the Lord, take out your memory verse and go over it again. Talk to the Lord about what this verse means to you personally.
- ➡ In the evening (at either your evening study or your evening devotions), see if you can quote your memory verse from memory. Then, without looking at the memory verse itself, see if you can find it in your Bible.
- ➡ The next day, before you begin committing a new verse to memory, rehearse your previous day's memory verse and see if you can remember it (without cheating!).
- ➡ Finally, at the end of the week (possibly on the Sunday), collect all your week's memory verses, rehearse them and see if you can recall them without reading them. Spend a little extra time on any verses you have difficulty recalling.
- ➡ Remember: Don't just memorize a verse. Put it into practice ([James 1:22](#)). It is not being able to quote a verse from memory that counts. It is His Word *abiding* in your heart that counts ([John 15:7](#)). When you actually apply a verse consistently to your daily life, that is when you *truly* know that verse!