

MENTOR



WEEK 3

FOR LIFE

THE BACHELOR: PERSIA

In January of 2024, the reality TV show, *The Bachelor*, will begin its 28th season. The show revolves around a man selected as “The Bachelor.” Then, 25 women compete to avoid elimination where one lucky lady may win a possible marriage proposal.

A 2017 CNN article stated that the most recent season brought in approximately \$86 million in advertising. *The Bachelor* remains a hit—not to mention the many spin-offs including *The Bachelorette*.

What most people don’t realize is that the idea for the Bachelor didn’t begin in 2002 with network executives. It’s biblical! Ok, not exactly. It certainly doesn’t reflect biblical guidance on dating and marriage. However, thousands of years before men were handing out roses to women and sending others packing on TV, King Xerxes held a similar empire-wide contest to find his new bride.

ESTHER 2 (SELECTED)

² The king’s young men who attended him said, “Let beautiful young virgins be sought out for the king. ³ And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather all the beautiful young virgins...⁴ And let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.” This pleased the king, and he did so.

⁵ Now there was a Jew in Susa the citadel whose name was Mordecai...⁷ He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother...⁸ So when the king’s order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many young women were gathered...Esther also was taken into the king’s palace...⁹ And the young woman pleased him and won his favor...¹⁰ Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known...

¹⁵...Now Esther was winning favor in the eyes of all who saw her. ¹⁶ And when Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus... ¹⁷ the king loved Esther more than all the women... so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti...

²¹ In those days, as Mordecai was sitting at the king’s gate... two of the king’s eunuchs... became angry and sought to lay hands on [the] King... ²² And this came to the knowledge of Mordecai, and he told it to Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai. ²³ When the affair was investigated and found to be so, the men were both hanged on the gallows. And it was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For most of us, our high school and college years are marked by the attempt to answer the question, “Who am I?” It usually doesn’t get asked like that, but the question is implied as friendships, relationships, activities, academic pursuits (and so on) come and go. It’s like we’re asking the world, “What am I good at?”

“What should I do?” “Does anyone care if I do it?”
Who you are *in Christ* is the most important thing about you. Scan the QR code to discover more.



DISCUSSION

Who is the first person with whom you want to share good news?

1. What do we learn about Mordecai and Esther? (5-7)
2. How did the king react to Esther? (17)
3. What did Mordecai learn while doing his job and what was done about it? (21-23)

4. Romans 12:2 says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Do you see this command lived out in our passage? Why or why not?

5. What temptations and challenges to your faith do you think you will encounter in the next five years?

6. How can a mentor help you walk faithfully through those challenges?

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

The world wants you to conform: to think, act, and feel the same things they do. Your identity in Christ is the foundation, and a mentor can help keep it strong. Talk to your Coach today!

MENTOR



FOR LIFE

STUDY NOTES

THE GIANT KILLER

Starting around the year 2000, Miami Police officer David Yuzuk befriended an aged, 4-foot 9-inch, homeless man named Richard Flaherty. After 15 years of friendship, Flaherty revealed who he really was. Little did Yuzuk know that Flaherty was the shortest man to ever serve in the military. He began in the 101st Airborne and eventually became a special forces Green Beret Captain earning the Silver Star, 2 Bronze Stars, and 2 Purple Hearts for his actions in Vietnam.

Dubbed “The Giant Killer,” Flaherty also served with the CIA, helped catch a smuggling ring at Fort Bragg, and worked as an undercover informant for the ATF.

Mysteriously, 10 days after Flaherty told Yuzuk his incredible story, Flaherty was killed in a hit and run accident. Yuzuk continued digging into the stranger than fiction history that ultimately led to a documentary about Flaherty’s life.

Flaherty was no angel or “knight in shining armor,” but he led quite an extraordinary life. He was so much more than meets the eye. His size could have been a real excuse—they had to use extra weights when he parachuted so he didn’t fly away. Not to mention the ridicule and prejudice he endured just to fight for his nation’s military. He didn’t just do his time, he excelled. He led men into battle in one of the most elite outfits in the military. He was “The Giant Killer.”

In today’s passage, we’ll finally meet the lead characters in the book of *Esther*—Mordecai and the younger cousin he raised as his own child, Esther. They were Jews living in Susa, the capital city of Persia. They were nobody’s. But, as we’ll soon see, there was more than meets the eye.

MENTORS MUST PREPARE FOR NEW ENVIRONMENTS

After Vashti’s removal, *the king’s young men* suggested, “**Let beautiful young virgins be sought out for the king...and let the young woman who pleases the king be queen.**” In other words, “The Bachelor: Persia.”

At this point in the story we officially meet *Mordecai* and *Hadassah, that is Esther*. **Esther was taken into the king’s palace, and the young woman pleased and won favor.** She was in the “game show”—and she was *winning*.

The author provided a note to the reader, “**Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known.**” Mordecai advised his mentee

not to reveal her Jewish heritage. This advice noted for the reader prepares the way for the unfolding drama.

When Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus... the king loved Esther more than all the women... so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen. She went from obscurity to imperial queen.

In verses 21 and following, a strange story is inserted. *Mordecai* overheard the planning of **two of the king’s eunuchs** who were **angry and sought to lay hands on [the] King. Mordecai told it to Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai. When the affair was investigated and found to be so, the men were both hanged.** The author foreshadows an important tidbit, **it was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.**

NEW ENVIRONMENTS CAN BRING NEW BLESSINGS

From Xerxes’ perspective, he had the most beautiful woman, *and she just saved his life!* He’s probably pretty thrilled with the way things turned out. Things “just so happened” to turn out really well.

From the human perspective, we encounter many “just so happened” moments. However, what must appear coincidental to the king actually represented a huge investment by Esther’s mentor, Mordecai, as well as the sovereign, providential hand of Almighty God. As stated in Zero Week, God’s name is never mentioned in *Esther*, but his power and presence are everywhere.

It’s maybe a little odd to us that Mordecai would ask Esther to conceal her Jewish heritage. But many times it’s important to trust a wise, well-selected mentor. It’s quite possible that the prejudice of the day could have prevented Esther from ever entering the king’s presence since she wasn’t Persian.

A good mentor is one who has walked the road you’re traveling. They’ve been there before and can help guide you along the way. They can help walk alongside you as you prepare for new environments. They can also help you take advantage of the blessings those new environments can bring.

This story reminds us that we don’t have the perspective to see people as God sees them. Nor can we see when greatness might be staring back at us—even if we’re looking in the mirror. Famed leadership and mentoring guru, John Maxwell, shared how he constantly reminds those he mentors, “I believe in you.” A good mentor can help reveal the greatness God has in store. They can be a part of God’s chisel to our exterior, such that by the end, all that’s left is the statue—the image the God wants the world to see—a blessing to the world.