

Esther  
*Gail Arterburn –2021*

Monday, 9:30 – 11:00 am  
To be discussed –04/26/21

Lesson 1  
Esther 1:1-22

1. The plans, purposes and nature of God are seen throughout the story of Esther, yet God is not mentioned one time in the book although He is at work everywhere behind the scenes. How would you define God's providence? Where has God worked providentially in your life?
  
2. Read Esther 1:1-9. Assuming these verses describe two different banquets, who was invited to the first one? (v. 3) How long did the king entertain his guests? What was the purpose? (v. 4) How long was the concluding banquet and who was included? (v. 5)
  
3. What "eye-witness" details are we given about this lavish party? What overall image was King Xerxes trying to portray? Do you think he was a weak or a strong ruler?
  
4. Read Esther 1:10-12. Why was Queen Vashti summoned to come before the king and his guests? Was the king as powerful as he believed himself to be? Who defied him? What was the immediate result?
  
5. Read Esther 1:13-22. Queen Vashti's refusal to go the banquet was the decision that set the whole plot of this book in motion. What was the first action of the king? (vs. 13-15)
  
6. Who was Memucan? How would you describe him? How did this "problem in the palace" escalate to a "problem in the whole kingdom"?
  
7. What happened to Vashti?
  
8. Vashti, Xerxes, Memucan and the other advisors all made their own decisions and choices. If you know the story of Esther, what was ultimately being accomplished through those individual choices? Who was determining the cause of human history?