

All Things Work Together for Good
(Lesson 1)

Introduction:

1. In Romans 8:28 a special message of assurance is given to God's faithful children -- "*all things work together for good.*"
2. This great principle is illustrated numerous times throughout the Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament that was "*written for our learning*" (Romans 15:4).
3. We are studying one particular illustration that is presented in "Esther."
4. This book is named after its main character -- Esther.
 - a. She was a young Jewish woman.
 - b. She became queen of the Persian Empire and saved her people from destruction.
5. Let us examine the setting for the events recorded in Esther.
 - a. God allowed the Babylonians to take Judah into captivity in 606 BC.
 - b. Jeremiah had prophesied that the Jews would be in captivity 70 years (Jeremiah 25).
 - c. In 536 BC, the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon.
 - d. Zerubbabel was allowed to lead a large group of Jews to Jerusalem, and they rebuilt the temple.
 - e. The return was voluntary, so many of the Jews remained in the land of captivity.
 - f. While Ahasuerus reigned as king of Persia, a plot was made to destroy all the Jews who did not return to Jerusalem.
 - g. Through Esther's efforts, the Jews were spared.
6. This lesson is a study of the information recorded in Esther 1.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.1-9) SEVERAL GREAT FEASTS WERE HELD
 - A. (vs.1-4) The king made a feast that lasted 180 days.
 1. He had a great empire -- he ruled over 127 provinces.
 2. During this feast he showed his riches to his princes, servants, and nobles.
 3. After this long feast, . . .
 - B. (vs.5-9) The king made another feast that lasted 7 days.
 1. Wine was served during this feast in abundance.
 2. Vashti the queen also made a feast for the women.
- II. (vs.10-12) THE KING BECAME ANGRY WITH THE QUEEN
 - A. Vashti was very beautiful.
 - B. On the 7th day the king commanded his servants to bring Vashti before him and his friends so they could admire her beauty.
 - C. The queen refused, and the king became very angry.
- III. (vs.13-20) A SOLUTION TO THIS SITUATION WAS PROPOSED
 - A. (vs.13-15) The king asked his 7 princes about what should be done to the queen.
 - B. (vs.16-20) One of the princes offered a suggestion.
 1. (vs.16) He first stated that the queen had wronged the king, the princes, and all the people.
 2. (vs.17-18) He was concerned with the influence Vashti would have on other women.
 3. (vs.19) He suggested that Vashti be replaced by another queen.
 4. (vs.20) This would cause all the women to give honor to their husbands.
- IV. (vs.21-22) THIS SUGGESTION WAS MADE A ROYAL DECREE
 - A. It was sent throughout the empire.
 - B. The laws of the Medes and Persians could not be changed (8:8; Daniel 6:8).