

## ESTHER

The book of Esther has been called the book of 'Providential Care', and is named after its principle character, Esther.

- Esther means “Star”, and although Jewish, she did not return to Jerusalem in spite of Isaiah/Jeremiah’s bidding and admonition.
  - Esther means “Star”
  - Esther’s Hebrew name is “Hadassah” meaning “myrtle tree” (Esther 2:7)
  - The myrtle tree was native to Babylonia and transplanted to Israel. The myrtle tree has a flower that has been described as a “starburst”



- Some Jews knew that God had instructed them to return to the Promised Land and obeyed while unfaithful Jews did not return to the Promised Land.
  - The deliverance of the Jews in the Book of Esther is completely due to God’s grace in spite of Israel’s disobedience and unrighteousness.
- The Dead Sea Scroll discovery revealed fragments of every book of the Tanakh except for the book of Esther.
- No New Testament writer quotes from the book of Esther.
- Martin Luther did not appreciate Esther (or Song of Solomon or Ecclesiastes), because Luther felt that it focused too much on the Jew.

<b>Five Jewish “Megillot” (meaning “Scrolls”) Small Scrolls Read Publicly at Memorials</b>		
<b><u>Book</u></b>	<b><u>Feast Publicly Read</u></b>	<b><u>Timeframe</u></b>
1. <u>Song of Solomon</u>	<u>Passover/Seder</u>	<u>March/April</u>
2. Ruth	Pentecost/Shavuot	May/June
3. Lamentations	Ninth of Av/Tisha B’Av	July/August
4. Ecclesiastes	Tabernacles/Sukkot	September/October
<b>5. Esther</b>	<b>Purim</b>	<b>February/March</b>
<i>All Five of these Book are in the “Writings” (Kethuv’im) section of the Jewish Scriptures (Tanakh)</i>		

483-473 BC (**Esther** Ch 6-7); No Spiritual Being directly mentioned in Esther, but “YAHWEH” is found four times in Acrostics (Coding of Bible). Other topics left unmentioned: prayer, Palestine, Israel, faith and the law of Moses.

The story of Esther can be applied to our lives as the Lord reveals His sovereign control over the world. “*Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*” (1 Corinthians 10:11)

### Persian Period 539-331 BC

<b>Kings of Persia</b>		
1. Cyrus “the Great”	550-530BC	Liberated the Jews from Babylon

2. Cambyses	530-522BC	Impedes Work on Temple
3. Pseudo-Smerdis/Gaumata	522BC	Trying to Usurp power for Mede Control
4. Darius I “the Great”	522-486BC	Reinstates Policies of Cyrus (Ezra 6:14-15)
5. Xerxes “the Great”	486-464BC	Husband of Esther
6. Artaxerxes	464-424BC	Ezra 4:7-11, 23; 7:1-21; 8:1; Nehemiah 2:1, 5:14, 13:6

1.Cyrus (Ezra 4:6) → 2.Darius (Daniel 9:1) → 3.Xerxes/Artaxerxes (Esther)

One reason that this story of Esther might resonate beyond the Jew to the Babylonians is due to the meanings behind the key characters.

- The name Elam is an Assyrian word meaning “high,” and it represented a group of people living east of Babylon who had ongoing war with them.
- The predominant victors in the book of Esther have corresponding Babylonian names while those who lose have Elamite undertones.

### Analogous Story of Babylon overcoming Elam

Name of Character in Book of Esther	Relation to Babylon or Elam
VASHTI	Elamite Goddess
ESTHER (Aramaic for Ishtar)	Babylonian Goddess
HADASSEH	Babylonian for Bride
MORDECAI (Hebrew for Marduk)	Babel God
HAMAN	Elamite God

21 Esther 1, 2, 3

#### Read Esther 1:1-9... The Persian Banquet of King Ahasuerus

1:1 Ahasuerus may be a title like “Pharaoh.” **Ahasuerus** (Hebrew ’Achashverosh), is a transliteration of the Persian name Khshayârshâ. The Persian name “Khshayârshâ” became “Xerxes” in Greek and “Assuerus” in Latin

- The Persian kingdom spread larger than any before as it stretched from India throughout the mid-east to Cush (the northern part of Africa).

1:2 Susa (or Shushan) was the Fall palace 200 miles east of Babylon (Daniel 8:2).

1:3 This feast in the third (revelation) year is connected to a historical banquet given in preparation of the expedition against Greece to revenge his father’s defeat 15 years earlier at Marathon.

1:4 Ahasuerus displayed his wealth for half of the year which shows his great pride (therefore, his great exposure to downfall).

- “Ahasuerus” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name “Xerxes.”
  - The name “Xerxes” is typically used because most of the information about Xerxes comes from Herodotus who is a Greek historian.
  - This celebration may have been in preparation for the assault on Greece. Persia lost the expensive “Second Persian War” to the Greeks (481-479) which began by the Persian emissaries being killed in Athens.

- Athens used naval forces while Spartans amassed a land force including the 300 Spartans that delayed the Persian army for a week at the narrow pass (between mountains and sea) of Thermopylae. Xerxes would end up fleeing the Second Persian War
  - “Artaxerxes” was the son of Ahasuerus
- 1:5 The king held this special week of celebration in his garden where all were invited to join. Attendance was not concerned with one’s personal standing or importance.
- 1:6 As the white linen (purity) hung with purple (royal) linen cords on silver (redemption) rods attached to marble (strength) columns, every participant could attest to the greatness of the king.
- 1:7 The measure of the King’s generosity reflected the King’s wealth, supply and provision. The Greeks found numerable gold challices when they conquered Persia.
- 1:8 The King set the law which was not to force participants to imbibe.
- When the King drank, everyone was required to drink; however, the amount that each individual drank (from a sip to a gulp) was completely up to the individual.
    - Persians were known for their drinking bouts
  - The supply of the King was completely dependent on the desire of the participant.
  - Wine represents joy which flowed freely to all as they desired.
- 1:9 Vashti would be more interested in her own banquet than the King’s banquet.
- **According to Esther 1:1, who ruled the global empire at the time?**
    - **Ahasuerus of Persia**
  - **According to Esther 1:4, how long did the banquet of the Persian king last?**
    - **Ahasuerus displayed his wealth for half of the year which shows his great pride (therefore, his great exposure to downfall).**
  - **According to Esther 1:5, who was invited to the Kings banquet?**
    - **Anyone in Susa regardless of one’s social standing**

**Read Esther 1:10-22... The King Rejects His Disobedient Queen**

Legend conveys that Vashti (historically called “Amestris”) was granddaughter of Nebuchadnezzar; Vashti means ‘beautiful woman’

<b>The Eunuchs of Ahasuerus</b> (Esther 1:10)		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Meanings</u>	<u>Story</u>
1. Mehuman	“Faithful/Multitude/Making an Uproar”	The multitude were bound for destruction but were given a gift of fortune by the Father of the wine press Who sees the covering of the Lamb.
2. Biztha	“Bound”	
3. Harbona	“His destruction/his sword”	
4. Bigtha	“Garden/Gift of Fortune”	
5. Abagtha	“Fortunate one/Father of the Wine Press”	
6. Zethar	“He that examines/beholds”	
7. Carkas	“The covering of the Lamb”	

- 1:11 The King was beckoning Vashti to simply appear in all her glory to bring glory to the king.
- The king was not asking; he was summoning his queen; this resulted in Vashti being replaced by a woman **“more worthy”** (1:19).
  - The King of Kings in Heaven had the beautiful bride of Israel that continued to deny His timing and representation, and He turned to the Gentiles.

- 1:12 The King was furious at the denial by the Queen
- 1:13 The wise King confers with counsel of men who understand the times (1 Chron 12:32) as well as law and justice. In current day, this transcends current world events to the “signs of the times.”

<b>Seven Officials of Persia &amp; Media as the King’s Advisors</b> (Esther 1:14)		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Meanings</u>	<u>Storyline (uninspired)</u>
1. Carshena	“A Lamb/sleeping”	<i>From sleeping</i>
2. Shethar	“Searching/a star”	<i>to searching</i>
3. Admatha	“A Cloud of death/mortal vapor”	<i>through invisible death</i>
4. Tarshish	“Contemplation/examination”	<i>to find</i>
5. Meres	“Worthy/lofty/abscess”	<i>one who is worthy</i>
6. Marsena	“Bitterness of a bramble”	<i>amid bitterness of sin</i>
7. Memucan	“To Prepare/Certain/True”	<i>that is certain.</i>
<i>These seven elders represented seven families closest to the King. The King was to marry a daughter of one of the seven families who was to be his primary wife – Vashti came from one of these seven families (Esther 7:14)</i>		

- 1:15 The King asks about the consequences of disobeying the law.
- 1:16 Disobedience and sin not only affects the Lord but all of mankind as the cursed ramifications are felt.
- 1:17 Unwise slogans are easily accepted undermining authority and restraint for freedom to pursue selfishness and pleasure.
- 1:18 The manner that one treats another reflects a innate tendency to treat the Lord in the same way. Disrespect for authority, anger, selfishness, etc. underline (undermine) all relationships whether physical or spiritual. Divorce reflects the spiritual unfaithfulness of man.
- 1:19 Written law could not be modified (Mt 5:18) and results in loss of fellowship with the King.
- 1:20 A non-alphabetized acrostic is utilized in four critical parts of Esther (1:20, 5:4; 5:13; 7:7) where consecutive words spell “YHWH;” twice are forward, and twice are backward.
- 1:21 The King followed the advice of Memucan (“certain truth”)
- 1:22 A royal decree was issued encouraging authority, hierarchy and order. The man was to be the master of the house, but also speak in understandable language – in other words, be understood with accepted expectations and reasonable demands. Of course, this story of Esther is about the influence of a submissive wife on her powerful husband (1 Cor 11:8, Gen 3:16, 1 Tim 2:11, 1 Pet 3:1-7).
- There is a “Time Gap” between chapters 1 & 2 - the celebration of the king was held in the third year of his reign (1:3), and Esther is not brought before the king until the seventh year of his reign (2:16).
    - Persia was defeated disastrously by Greece reducing the Persian army of 2 million men to 5,000. The Persian King selects Esther 4 years after the feast.
  - **According to Esther 1:12, what was Vashti’s response to the Kings invitation to His banquet?**
    - **The Queen rejected the invitation of the King**
  - **According to Esther 1:6, who did the Queen wrong by not coming at the behest of the King?**

- **The Queen hurt all of the subjects of the King**
- **According to Esther 1:17-18, who would replicate the Queen’s behavior?**
  - **The leading ladies of Persia and Media**
  - **They were probably at the Queen’s banquet and had witnessed firsthand her refusal to come to the King.**

**Read Esther 2:1-4... A Successor to Queen Vashti is Sought**

2:1 It appears that the King missed Vashti in spite of her rebellion. The historian Josephus states that the King regretted putting Vashti away; however, if she were to regain her authority, the seven counselors would be at risk.

2:2 The King searched for a pure (virgin) bride to please him. Historically, there was a four-year time frame between Vashti and Esther.

- The two year “Second Persian War with the Greeks may have occurred at this time. Historians document that after King Ahasuerus’ failed conquest of Greece, he returned home and spent much more time with his harem.

2:3 The term “Harem” originates from the Arabic term “Hareem” which means forbidden, sacred or set apart.

- In the same way, the church is to be sanctified (set apart) for Christ (Eph 5:25-27; Rev 19:7-9, 21:2, 9; Is 54:5, 62:5; 2 Cor 11:2; Mk 2:19-20)
- Hegai (“Separation; Meditation”) was to prepare these potential brides of the King. The term “eunuch” can refer to one who was castrated or simply to a high level official.

2:4 The rebellious Queen (Vashti) would be replaced by the bride who pleases the King; this plan of action pleased the King.

- **According to Esther 2:4, who would ultimately replace the rebellious Queen?**
  - **The one who pleased the King**

**Read Esther 2:5-16... Esther Prepares to Meet the King**

2:5 Mordecai was a Benjamite just like Saul, so Esther was from a royal line; Mordecai means “contrition” or “bitter.” Regardless of the evil captivity of this world, God always has representation: Egypt/Joseph; Babylon/Daniel; Persia/Mordecai

- The name “Mordecai” was listed as one who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:2)
- Archeologists have discovered a cuneiform tablet from Borsippa near Babylon that mentions a man by the name of Mardukaya (Mordecai) in relation with the Persian court during the period of Ahasuerus.

2:6 Mordecai had been established in captivity when the evil Jeconiah was taken into Babylonian exile (2 Ki 24:10-15)

2:7 Esther’s (Persian name) Hebrew name was Hadassah meaning “Myrtle” (Zech 1:10) and symbolizing “source of life and strength” as it gives a fragrant odor that is used as a stimulant tonic (Is 55:13) and also a sign of victory as the oval headdress garland made of myrtle was given to denote winners. Esther was an orphan who had been adopted by her uncle Mordecai.

2:8 Josephus documents that Ahasuerus kept 400 concubines; the ancient historian Plutarch documents that “Artaxerxes” (the son of Ahasuerus) had 360 concubines.

## Consequences of Righteousness

REFERENCE	ANCESTRY	ACTION	POSSIBLE RESULT
1 SAMUEL 15 (Saul disobeys)	Agag is Haman's Ancestor	Bad that Saul didn't kill Agag	Israel could have been eliminated
2 SAMUEL 16 (David spares)	Shimei is Mordecai's Ancestor	Good that David didn't kill Shimei	Mordecai used to save Israel

- 2:9 In spite of the many who desired to be chosen by the King, Esther won favor with Hegai. Esther had seven (full, complete, satisfied) maid servants and was domiciled in the most luxurious place.
- 2:10 Esther was obedient to the counsel of Mordecai that she should conceal her Jewish heritage
- 2:11 Mordecai cared deeply for his adopted daughter, and he checked on her well-being daily.
- 2:12 Myrrh was used in preparation to see the King (as Myrrh and other ointments were also used in the preparation of death). Six represents the “number of man”, and two “six month periods” were preparation to see the King.
- 2:13 The term “you can’t take it with you” did not apply as the woman was allowed her wishes to bring anything before the King, but her appeal may not align with the King’s will. The King would judge the woman during the darkness of night.
- 2:14 In the light (of morning), the King would send the woman to Shaashgaz (“He who shears the sheep”), and she would not return to the King unless He called her by name.
- King Ahasuerus had three divisions in his harem: wives, concubines, virgins
- 2:15 Abihail means “Father of might/strength.” Esther did not express any personal will in regards to pleasing the King beyond what the King’s servant recommended as he understood the mind of the King.
- 2:16 This shows the four-year gap between Vashti and Esther.
- 2:17 The King crowned his choice and gave her a celebratory banquet for all of his servants.
- 2:18 For a period of time, King Ahasuerus did not collect taxes as a gift or have a military draft.
- 2:19 This celebration was the second time that the women met the King while Mordecai sat at the King’s gate. The first contestants had initially been brought together, and now that Esther was chosen, the contestants were assembled a second time to honor her.
- 2:20 Obedience and submission were not new qualities of Esther, but characteristics that she had observed from childhood. Her disposition was one of deference and compliance.
- 2:21 Two (witness) doorkeepers, Bigthan (“In the press/Giving meat”) and Teresh (“Firm/Desire”), became collaborators for murder in their anger at the King.

- These may have been the two personal guards at the bedroom or study of Ahasuerus. These men had personal, private access to Mordecai.
- 2:22 Josephus records that a Jewish slave of one of the door-keeping assassins overheard the plot and revealed it to Mordecai.
- 2:23 Mordecai exposes plot against King and the two offenders were impaled on a stick or hung at the gallows (crucifixion was invented by Persians and later adopted by Romans)
- This is Chronicled in the King’s Persian records and not the Chronicles of Scripture.
  - The King investigated Esther account that she relayed from Mordecai.
- **According to Esther 2:4, what tribe of Israel was Mordecai’s ancestry?**
    - **Benjamin**

**Read Esther 3:1-6... Haman Prepares Vendetta Against Mordecai**

- 3:1 At the time when one would think praiseworthy Mordecai would be honored, instead it was a new character, Haman who was an Agagite from Kings of Amalek (1 Sam 15:8).
- The Amalekites were the ancient enemies of the Israelites (Ex 17:8-16; Numbers 24:7; 1 Chronicles 4:42-43). They were the first to attack the Jewish people during the Exodus from Egypt. When the Amalekites saw weary Israel, they attacked the elderly and young who were lagging behind. (Deuteronomy 25:17-18).
- 3:2 While all of the King’s servants revered Haman, Mordecai would not submit nor humble himself to this evil leader.
- If Haman was an Amalekite, this may have been a reason that Mordecai would not bow to him.
- 3:3 The King’s subjects began exalting the King’s men instead of the King Himself.
- 3:4 Mordecai’s risk was to be exposed for association as God’s chosen people, the Jew.
- 3:5 Evil is based on pride – exalting one’s self. Believers should be very careful when they become offended;
- 3:6 The political leader (as the anti-Christ of the tribulation) set out to destroy all of God’s people, the Jew.
- **According to Esther 3:1, who were the ancestry of Haman?**
    - **Hammedatha the Agagite**

**Read Esther 3:7-15... King Ahasuerus Bribed to Endorse Haman’s Genocide**

- 3:7 Lots were cast (Proverbs 16:33) for the date of destruction. The Feast of Purim is celebrated on this date because Israel would be delivered – the planned date gave a full year before day of event. This occurred four years and two months after Esther became Queen (Esther 2:16).
- Jews were told not to partake in any celebrations that were not mentioned in the law of Moses (Lev 27:34), so this book may have been included because it establishes Purim.
  - “Pur” meant “lots”, “dice” or the casting of lots/dice; archeologists have found triangular lots in the ancient grounds of Susa.

- It seems that Haman engaged sorcerers or diviners to cast the lots before him. Haman seems to have been superstitious and looking for celestial direction on the day to destroy the Jews.
  - Nisan was the first month of the Jewish calendar (March/April w/ Passover) while Adar was the last month of the Jewish calendar (February/March w/ Purim)
- 3:8 God's people have always lived in isolation as they walk a separated walk from the world, and while morality of this world is defined by media whim and public opinion, God's people always hold His word as the truth.
- The world has never been "tolerant" of the truth of God; those who truly follow God are viewed as different.
- 3:9 Ten thousand talents of silver were 2/3 the annual budget of the kingdom of Persia. King Ahasuerus had recently lost an expensive "Second Persian War" with Greece, so he may have needed the funds to rebuild.
- 3:10 The King used his authority and signet ring as Haman attempted to "seal" the Jews fate; Haman is called the enemy of the Jews.
- 3:11 King had lost such wealth in the Greek War that he agrees to Jewish destruction and confiscation (included Hamon taking property).
- This may have begun the bargaining process between the King and Haman; the King admitted that the silver belonged to Haman to do with as he would (including donating it to the king).
  - This King of Persia was manipulated by his counselors (Daniel 6:12, 15).
- 3:12 The thirteenth day of the first month is the night before Passover, and once again the powers of this world move against God's people.
- The communication was written in the individual languages of the various ethnic groups (Esther 1:22).
  - The Satraps (approximately 30) were responsible for large spacious geographies while the governors had less authority over the nations while the princes were the local authorities.
- 3:13 The worldly kingdoms have habitually passed brutal legislation against God's people.
- God's people have been persecuted for their desire to share the love of God because that love is based on the Lord's will while man is pursuing his own pleasure.
  - The law was to kill all of the Jews regardless of the gender or age.
  - The persecution would occur on a single day – the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. The number "thirteen" represents "rebellion" while the number "twelve" represents "testimony" – this would be a testimony to the power of God.
- 3:14 Similar to the Great Tribulation, public law was communicated to enable mass persecution of God's people.
- 3:15 While this King sat to drink with evil Haman, the citadel of Shushan was perplexed at the order.
- **According to Esther 3:7, how did Haman select the day to persecute the Jews?**
    - **He had lots cast before him**
  - **According to Esther 3:9, what did Haman say that he would do if the King agreed?**



- **He would pay the hitmen who carried out the devastation.**

22 Esther 4, 5, 6

**Read Esther 4:1-8... Mordecai Grieves the Decree while Esther Grieves for Mordecai**

4:1 Mordecai was affected in the three traditional ways (Jonah 3:5-6; Isaiah 37:1):

1. Grief (torn clothes as his covering was not sufficient)
2. Humility versus worldliness (sackcloth & ashes – 1 Cor 3:11-15)
3. Crying out in downtown (versus Seeking God in Jerusalem’s Temple).

4:2 No one could enter the King’s gate clothed in sackcloth

4:3 God’s people fasted, wept, and donned sackcloth and ashes (Neh 9:1).

4:4 Mordecai did not accept the covering sent by the queen because that would also prove insufficient. Worldly comforts cannot appease spiritual concerns.

4:5 Hathach (“verily”) was used as the mediator between Mordecai and Esther. Esther wanted to know the reason for Mordecai’s behavior; she did not condemn his action but sought understanding.

4:6 Mordecai spent much time at the King’s gate (Esther 2:19, 21, 3:2, 4:2, 5:9, 13, 6:10, 12)

4:7 Haman must have made his “grant” (for the slaughter of the Jews) to the King public knowledge to the exact amount.

4:8 The Law of the Lord is also an edict on the judgment of sin, but it becomes much more when shown, explained, and used to instruct on the proper approach to the King, implore his favor (only through Jesus), and intercede for others.

- **According to Esther 4:2, how far did Mordecai come to the King in sackcloth?**
  - **Mordecai came to the gate of the Palace**
  - **It was illegal for someone grieving to go any closer than the gate; therefore, anyone with any grievance would have been stopped at the gate.**
  - **Mordecai was often at the gate, so he may have a type of judge. (Esther 2:19, 21, 5:9, 13, 6:10, 12)**
- **According to Esther 4:2, what was the response of every Jew in the Persian Empire?**
  - **Fasting, weeping, wailing, sackcloth, ashes**
- **According to Esther 4:3, what was Esther’s response to Mordecai in sackcloth?**
  - **She attempted to clothe him in a new robe without correcting the reason that he was grieving**
- **According to Esther 4:5, how did Esther learn of the King’s edict?**
  - **Esther learned through Mordecai**
  - **Mordecai had a copy of the edict and even understood the exact amount paid to King Ahasuerus by Haman.**

**Read Esther 4:9-17... Esther & Mordecai Clarify Their Positions**

- 4:10 Esther used a mediator from the palace to talk with Mordecai.
- 4:11 There is only one law – the death penalty (Rom 3:20, 5:20-21, 7:5, 8:2; 1 Cor 15:56) for anyone not chosen to be called to the King (1 Pet 2:9).
- Jesus provides the righteous scepter that extends towards those who receive it (Hebrews 1:8)
- 4:12 Esther had not been summoned to the King for 30 days (three equates to revelation).
- 4:13 Esther was not to take solace and be complacent in the safety of her position in the King’s palace (Mt 12:34; 15:11; Rom 10:8-10)
- 4:14 The Highlight of Esther: *“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”* (Mt 9:37, 24:14, Mk 16:15)
- Silence would have been a grave sin.
  - God’s providence might be to use you in His salvation.
  - God has an overarching divine plan for each of His individual people.
- 4:15 It is interesting that prayer is not mentioned but is simply implied along with fasting.
- 4:16 All Jews in Shushan fasted without food and drink for three days, and then Esther will approach the King counter to the law.
- Esther assures Mordecai that she and her maidens would fast as well. Esther may have led her Gentile maidens to a belief in Yahweh or she had recruited Jewish maidens.
  - *“If I perish, I perish”* – Esther has found something more important than life itself as she commits to God’s plan for her life or even for her death (Daniel 3:17-18)
- 4:17 As Esther finds her courage to offer her life, for the first time, Mordecai obeys Esther’s command and performs her wishes. In submission, Esther has authority that is focused on the Lord’s will instead of her own gratification.
- **According to Esther 4:11, what was the law of the King about approaching?**
    - **The King has to call the person or the scepter is extended to the one seeking the King’s audience.**

**Read Esther 5:1-8... Esther Invites Ahasuerus and Haman to a Banquet**

- 5:1 On the third (revelation) day, Esther shows how to approach the throne – by being clothed correctly covered in royal robes. (Revelation 19:7-8, 14).
- No one could enter or leave the palace without the view of the King.
  - Archeologists have found the framework of the palace which fits the location and description exactly.

Esther found the favor of the King by Grace – not by Law; the King held out his <b>scepter</b> and Esther went near and touched it. Esther 5:2; 8:4		
Esther 4:11	<i>“...the king has but one law: that he be put to death. The only exception to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life.”</i>	The Law requires <b>Death</b> before the King
Ps 45:6, Ps 2:9, Rev 2:27, 12:5	<i>“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.”</i>	God’s scepter of <b>Justice</b> must be satisfied

Hebrews 1:8	But about the Son he says, “ <i>Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.</i> ”	The King’s scepter of <b>Righteousness</b> is the only pardon
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- 5:2 Before Esther ever came near the King, he saw her and gained the King’s approval (1 John 4:19), Esther approached the King and touched the top of the scepter.
- 5:3 The King asks three times what Esther’s petition or request is (5:6 & 7:2) – the first two times Esther requested the King and Haman to come to a banquet, but the third time responded to evil Haman’s plan.
- 5:4 Esther positions the request as seeking to be pleasing to the King. The consonant letter of the first four words of this verse are “YHWH” (the covenant name of God)
- 5:5 The King sends for Haman to come quickly.
- 5:6 The King understands that this banquet is not the final request of Esther, but that she must have another request.
- 5:7 It appears that Esther begins to tell the King her true request, but seem to have lost confidence and courage.
- 5:8 Esther postpones until the morrow to tell the King what Haman has done.
- **According to Esther 5:1, what caused Esther to obtain favor from the King?**
    - **The King saw Esther in the court.**
  - **According to Esther 5:3, what did the King ask of Esther when she approached?**
    - **The King asked Esther what was troubling her.**
    - **The King asks three times what Esther’s petition or request is (5:6 & 7:2) – the first two times Esther requested the King and Haman to come to a banquet, but the third time responded to evil Haman’s plan.**

**Read Esther 5:9-14... Haman Prepares for Esther’s Banquet & Mordecai’s Death**

- 5:9 Mordecai did not respect nor fear the evil man, Haman (Ps 56:4, 11; Prov 29:25).  
Mordecai may have had an official position at the gate of King Ahasuerus (Esther 10:2).
- 5:10 Haman’s friends are mentioned first and then his wife, Zeresh (“misery/strange/dispersed inheritance/gold”)
- 5:11 Haman boasted about his promotion and position and riches to his wife and friends.
- 5:12 Haman found Esther’s invitation an exceptional honor.
- 5:13 The fleeting pleasures and treasures of the world do not satisfy; a worldly person is always wanting more.
- In fact, a good measure as to whether something is beneficial is if it breeds satisfaction or desire for more when it is over (e.g. vacations, pleasures, etc. expand into growing addictions).
  - Hate harms and eventually destroys the one emitting that emotion.
- 5:14 Haman’s wife (and friends) urge that in spite of Haman’s boasting and pride, his focus should be on punishing Mordecai with 75 feet high crosses to impale him. (**Esther 9:13**)
- Instead of quelling Haman’s evil intent, his wife stoked the fire within him to perform evil; Haman’s wife, Zeresh, was a much different spouse than Esther.
  - **According to Esther 9:10, what was Haman’s response to the lack of respect or fear from Mordecai?**

- **Haman controlled himself and went home to his wife and friends**

**Read Esther 6:1-6... The King Discovers that Mordecai Should Be Recognized**

6:1 King Ahasuerus could not sleep (similar to Daniel 6:18), so he calls for this record of the King. God was involved even in the amount of sleep.

6:2 The King desires to justly reward Mordecai for his faithful act.

6:3 Mordecai had gone five years without recognition of saving King's life

6:4 Haman's hatred for God's people would be his downfall; in the same way, evil people will bear the fruits of their evil plans.

6:5 Ambitious Haman seemed to be the first at court that day because he was going to ask of the King to have Mordecai hanged.

6:6 Haman pridefully expects that the King desires to honor him.

- **According to Esther 6:1, how was the King Mordecai reminded that Mordecai save his life?**

- **The King read the Chronicles of the King when he couldn't sleep**
- **Believers should read the Lord's Word when they can't sleep**

**Read Esther 6:7-14... Haman Exalts Mordecai According to the King's Command**

6:7-8 Haman defines for items for the one that a king would like to honor:

1. Wear the Kings Robe
  - A White Robe (Revelation 6:11)
  - Robe of Righteousness (Isaiah 61:10)
  - Priests clothed with Salvation (2 Chronicles 6:41; Ps 132:16)
2. Ride on the King's horse
  - The armies of heaven on white horses (Rev 19:11, 14)
3. A crown presented from the King
  - Imperishable Crown (1 Corinthians 9:24-25)
  - Crown of Rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19)
  - Crown of Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8)
  - Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:4)
  - Crown of Life (Revelation 2:10)

6:9 Haman is similar to prideful anti-God activists who oppose God's chosen people; they will only be honored by the limited worldly peers, but Royal Covering, Royal Horse, Royal Crest on the head will only be done for those whom the King delights to honor (6:11)

6:10 The King told Haman to quickly take the robes and horses. King Ahasuerus knew where Mordecai would faithfully be sitting.

- The King knew that Mordecai was a Jew (possibly written in the Chronicles that the King read in the night).
- King Ahasuerus warns Mordecai not to "fall short/fail"; the Hebrew word is "tappei" used only in this verse in Scripture.
- Jews have a phrase v'NaHaFoch Hu (Pronounced "Va-Na-Ha-Fa-Who") which can mean:
  - "it was turned around"
  - "it was the opposite of what was expected"
  - "it is topsy turvy with things being turned on their heads"

- “it is a miraculous event, in a bad way, that will end up being a miraculous event in a good way...”
  - When things in this world go disastrous for believers, it is helpful to remember that this might simply be v’NaHaFoch Hu
- 6:11 The elevation had nothing to do with the individual; it was solely based on the individual that the King desired to honor. The Lord elevates sinners by His grace.
- 6:12 Haman began to experience humility with his head covered (2 Samuel 15:30; Ps 44:15)
- 6:13 Wise men (possibly Magi) warned Haman that if Mordecai was of Jewish descent, he would fail.
- Although Haman’s wife and friends had advised Haman to construct gallows, they now separated themselves from the consequences as they told Haman, “*Your* downfall is certain.” This is similar to the warning from Pilate’s wife at the crucifixion of Jesus (Mt 27:19).
- 6:14 Once again, as Haman was taken to the King expecting to be honored, he was being rushed to his judgment. (Mt 7:22)
- **According to Esther 6:7-8, what three items were given to Mordecai to exalt him?**
    - **Mordecai was to receive a robe, a horse and a crown from the King**

23 Esther 7, 8, 9, 10

### **Read Esther 7:1-6... Esther Pleas for Her Life and Condemns Haman**

- 7:1 Esther could have spoken to the King in private, but she chose to have the evil conspirator, Haman attending in person as well.
- 7:2 Ancient Persians were known for their consumption of alcohol (Esther 1:7-8). Once again, the King asks Esther’s request be made known. The King recognizes her as “Queen Esther” which gives more authority because she is in relation to the King as Queen instead of simply “Esther”.
- 7:3 Esther requests that the King spare her life (and that of her people) if she has pleased him and obtained his approval
- Initially, Esther does not petition for all of the Jews, but she makes it personal about her life
  - Esther learned that the palace would not be a safe haven for her from Mordecai (**Esther 4:13**)
  - In the same way, Satan is looking to condemn each believer of God (Zech 3:1-2; 2 Cor 2:11)
- 7:4 Esther says that she and her people have been “sold” beyond slavery to death (Is 50:1, 52:3; Gen 37:28; Lev 25:42; Judges 2:14, 3:8, 4:2, 10:7; Lk 12:6)
- Believers need the grace of God because sin doesn’t just take captive, it also destroys and kills.
- 7:5 King Ahasuerus asks Esther who would seek to take her life.
- 7:6 Haman is characterized with three descriptors: 1. Adversary (1 Pet 5:8) 2. Enemy (Mt 13:39; Acts 13:10) 3. Evil (Mt 5:37, 6:13; 1 Jn 2:13)
- **According to Esther 7:3, what does Esther request of the King?**
    - **Salvation**

- **According to Esther 7:4, what circumstance would Esther have not disturbed the King?**
  - **If she and her people were going to be put into slavery**

### **Read Esther 7:7-10... Haman is Executed on His Own Gallows**

7:7 The King seems to have enjoyed alcohol immensely, but now he was so upset that he walked away from drinking alcohol (**Esther** 1:7-8, 3:15, 4:16, 7:1, 8). As the enraged King took a walk in his garden, the evil one begged the queen for his life.

- The evil one needed an intercessor for his life as the queen had mediated for her people.

7:8 The identity of the location was the place that they had been drinking wine. As the words left the King's mouth, the darkness of judgment fell over Haman.

- The cover over the man's face may be associated with Haman no longer being able to view the King – or anything else.
- Throughout the Bible, wine represents joy as well as blood, and in this instance, both are applicable.

7:9 Harbona ("his destruction/his sword") understands the purpose behind Haman's gallows.

7:10 Haman was hanged on the gallows that he had made for Mordecai (Num 32:23); the doom and death that the evil one had planned for the righteous one was experienced by himself. Be careful about building "gallows" for others.

- **According to Esther 7:7, what did the King leave when he was angered?**
  - **The King arose from drinking wine**
  - **The King had also reacted angrily with his judgment against Vashti (Esther 1:12)**

### **Read Esther 8:1-7... Esther Pleads for Her People**

8:1 Esther revealed her association with Mordecai who had saved King Ahasuerus from assassination.

- The identity of Haman was defined by his enmity against the Jews. This is similar to Satan, the accuser.
- The entire house of Haman (thought to be immense) was given to Esther.

8:2 King transferred his authority to Mordecai via his signet ring while Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman

8:3 Esther fell at the King's feet, wept and begged for the salvation of her people.

- Haman had proclaimed an edict that the Jews could be killed on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month.

8:4 The use of the scepter reveals that the King had power over Esther's life, and the King actively chose to extend grace to her.

8:5 Esther pleads with the King to have the law revoked which is impossible for the King to do.

8:6 Israel was saved on the basis of relation to Esther (their mediator) and not on the intrinsic worth of Israel themselves.

8:7 King Ahasuerus discusses with Esther as well as Mordecai who is now in the King's presence. King Ahasuerus tells them that he has passed judgment on their enemy based upon Haman's actions against the Jews when in reality, King Ahasuerus was

primarily upset because of Haman's threat to Esther. The King gave Haman's house to Esther because of what Haman had done.

- **According to Esther 8:4, what is the King's response when Esther pleads for her people?**
  - **The King extends a scepter to Esther**

### **Read Esther 8:8-17... Mordecai Sends an Edict in the King's Name**

8:8 The King gives Mordecai the authority to send his own edict in the King's name.

8:9 Longest Verse in the Bible – the time frame of May/June would have been during the time of the Pentecost Feast.

- Mordecai authored the letter from the King that went in each language to those in the extensive territory.
- The Holy Spirit was given at the time of the Pentecost as well as the Law from Mt. Sinai.

8:10 It was not Mordecai's authority in which he wrote the commands of the King, but instead it was the King's authority and carriers that conveyed the salvation of Mordecai's people throughout the kingdom.

- Although Scripture was written by ~40 men, the words carry the authority of the Lord and King.

8:11 Judgment often fits crime (Mt 7:2 & Galatians 6:7)

8:12 The edict from Mordecai asserted that Jews were sanctioned to gather and kill their persecutors (as well as take their spoil).

- This "counter" law seems to use the same language as Haman (Esther 3:13) except this law would be used in the defense of the Jews.
- The old law could not be revoked; however, a new law/covenant/testimony, could be established in the king's name.

8:13 The edict from Mordecai was copied and distributed so that God's people would understand how to defend themselves on the day of attack.

8:14 The King's couriers were entrusted with taking the King's message to all of the Jews (God's people).

- In similar ways, ministers and missionaries are the King's couriers that take His law to those around the world.

8:15 Mordecai was covered with three elements of clothing: 1.Purple (royal) and White (pure) clothing 2.Great Golden Crown (authority) 3.Purple (royal) robe of fine linen (purity)

8:16 Jews had joy that resulted from the good news of the King; King's edict depended on the Jews choice to pursue it (Esther 8:11)

8:17 God's people celebrated the edict of the King and many converted to Judaism out of fear of reprisal (proselytes). The city of Susa had initially been distraught and confused by Haman's edict (Esther 3:15), but now they celebrated.

- **According to Esther 8:8, since Haman's edict could not be recounted, what action did King Ahasuerus take?**
  - **King Ahasuerus allowed Mordecai to write an edict with the King's authority**

### **Read Esther 9:1... The Jews Destroy Their Enemies**

9:1 When the enemies of God’s people expected to rout them, the opposite happened and God’s people were victorious (as it had been with Haman and Mordecai on an individual level).

9:2 The Jews gathered to take offense to those who intended to harm them.

- With a Jewish Queen (Esther) and Jewish Prime Minister (Mordecai), it would have been expedient to convert to Judaism at the time.

9:3-4 As Mordecai increasingly gained power in the King’s palace, the leaders respectfully feared him and acted in obedience with his will.

9:5 Anyone who hated God’s people paid the penalty of death.

9:6 In Persia’s capital city of Susa, 500 anti-Semitic men were executed.

9:7-10 Jews ended that house of Amalek

<b>The Sons of Haman (Esther 9:7-10)</b>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Meanings</u>	<u>Storyline (uninspired)</u>
1. Parshandatha	“Interpreter of the Law/Curious self”	<i>Interest in the Law from man’s self-pity is given by a revered weapon who is generous to the impoverished who draws water as a warrior who is strong bold dignified and pure.</i>
2. Dalphon	“Crafty/House of Caves/Self Pity”	
3. Aspatha	“Given by a sacred horse”	
4. Poratha	“Fruitful/Given by Fate/Generous self”	
5. Adalia	“One that draws water/poverty/death”	
6. Aridatha	“Given by the mountain/warrior/strong self”	
7. Parmashta	“Strong fisted/a yearling bull/preminent”	
8. Arisai	“Lion like/Bold”	
9. Aridai	“The Strong/Dignified”	
10. Vaizatha	“Given of the Best One/Son of the Atmosphere/Pure”	

9:10 The killings were not out of greed and were not to be justified by plunder; instead this was a verdict on wickedness. This is unlike the edict against the Jews that had allowed for plundering (Esther 3:13). The first edict had come out some time before, so it is highly likely that the enemies of the Jews had become evident through statements and actions before the appointed time.

- **According to Esther 9:1, what occurred to the Jews?**
  - **The Jews gained mastery over their enemies.**
- **According to Esther 9:10, what did the Jews not do on judgment day?**
  - **The Jews did not plunder and take spoils from those who were killed**
  - **If those who were killed were Amalekites from Agag, the Jews had been forbidden to plunder and take spoil. (1 Samuel 15:8)**

**Read Esther 9:11-16... The King Grants Esther an Additional Request**

9:11 King Ahasuerus received news of the number of Gentiles slain at the palace in Susa.

9:12 Although a great deal had already been given to Esther, the King states that he will grant Esther’s demand even without knowing what she would request.

9:13 As their father, Haman’s 10 sons were killed on the gallows (Dt 21:23; Gal 3:13 → “cursed”)

9:14-15 An additional day was added in the city of Susa for judgment against the wicked. No plunder was taken because wealth was not the justification for the verdict as 300 additional men died.

9:16 In fact, plunder and wealth was not taken by the Jews in any part of the kingdom as plunder might have skewed judgment for selfish gain.



- As Haman’s gallows were 75 feet high, one thousand evil men died for every foot of gallows.

### **Read Esther 9:17-32... Establishing the Feast of Purim**

9:17-18 The Jews desired to set apart a day (or season) of joy and rest following the work of ridding the land of evil.

- The way that this became to be a two-day feast was that the Jews throughout the empire celebrated throughout the fourteenth day while those Jews gathering in the capital city of Susa celebrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month.
- Even in modern day, the two days of Purim hold true – Jews celebrate on either the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> depending on their location.
- The Sabbath should be celebratory of the blessing of the Lord.

9:19 The Jewish culture continues to celebrate Purim on the fourteenth; possibly all Jews are “rural until Jesus reinstates His Kingdom in Jerusalem. Purim commemorates the events of the Book of Esther and it is still the practice to give care packages (e.g. food and drink) to the impoverished.

9:20 Mordecai may have been the author of Esther, and he wrote letters to establish the annual celebration of Purim on either one of the two days (14 or 15) of Adar.

9:21 Those who celebrated on 14<sup>th</sup> were outside of Susa while the inhabitants of Susa celebrated on the 15<sup>th</sup>. (**Esther** 9:17-18)

9:22 Israel was told to celebrate this as a time when their sorrow was turned to joy just as Jesus’ death on the cross was victorious and losing one’s life results in the person gaining eternal life.

9:23 The Jews made plans to keep the celebration of Purim each year going forward.

9:24 Haman had schemed against God’s people and cast “Pur” which means lot. This is the origin of the name of Purim.

9:25 Just as Antiochus Epiphanes, Adolph Hitler, and the future anti-Christ attempt to terminate Israel from the world, it will be a surprising time of victory.

### **Modern Day Purim**

**Similarities have been identified between Purim in the Nuremberg war crime trials. In the Book of Esther, Haman's ten sons were hanged (Esther 9:13); in 1946, ten of Hitler's top associates were put to death by hanging for their war crimes (including the crime of murdering 6 million Jews). It is also interesting that, in the traditional text of the Megillah (Book of Esther), in the list of the names of Haman's sons, the letters Tav in the first name, Shin in the seventh name and Zayin in the tenth name are written in smaller letters than the rest. The numerical value of Tav-Shin-Zayin is 707, and these ten men were hanged in the Jewish year 5707 (the thousands digit is routinely skipped when writing Jewish years; there are no numerals for thousands in Hebrew numbering). They were not hanged on Purim, though -- they were hanged on Hoshanah Rabbah.**

**Another echo of Purim is found in the Soviet Union a few years later. In early 1953, Stalin was planning to deport most of the Jews in the Soviet Union to Siberia, but just before his plans came to fruition, he suffered a stroke and died a few days later. He suffered that stroke on the night of March 1, 1953: the night after Purim (note: Jewish days end at sunset; you will see March 1 on the calendar as Purim). The plan to deport Jews was not carried out.**

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9:26 Purim is Feast to remember deliverance (not divinely instituted)

9:27-28 This salvation is important for Israel to remember because they have been hated through the millennia, and this is a story of hope of their salvation regardless of the daunting anti-Semitism.

9:29 Esther joined with Mordecai in writing another letter regarding the Feast of Purim.

9:30 This letter was characterized by the two words of ‘peace’ and ‘truth’.

9:31 On the 13<sup>th</sup>, the Jews should fast and lament the persecution of the Jews, but on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> they are to celebrate.

9:32 The second letter of remembrance was written with as much authority as the first and was to be held equally fervently because the events of Esther’s life show God’s on-going salvation.

### **Read Esther 10:1--3... Mordecai Is Second Only to King Ahasuerus**

10:1 King Ahasuerus was a powerful King who had been influenced by a submissive wife – the power of humility (Ps 45:10-11).

10:2 These are not the Chronicles of Scripture, but instead these are the court record referenced throughout the book (Esther 2:23, 6:1)

10:3 Just as Joseph was second in command in Egypt, Mordecai was elevated to being second only to the King, and he used his position for the welfare of God’s people.

- The book of Esther concludes with the greatness of Mordecai instead of Esther