



# THE WORD ON THE STREET

A PARAPHRASE BY BOB BOYD

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## *The Story of* Esther

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# Foreword

I share my study notes, which I call the “Word on the Street,” with others in hopes God will use them to awaken in you and other readers, a fascination and love for the Bible and its teachings. It is God’s “Handbook for Living.”

I believe you will find my notes to be in common, conversational language, as I would say the words to you as a friend. Sometimes they may be a little “gritty,” just like our ordinary daily conversations. If they help you to understand the message of the Scriptures then they have served their purpose well.

Prior to my spiritual reawakening in 1978, my focus was on material things and self-gratification. When I was 15 I had a spiritual experience, and I had been sincere in my teens, but I became more and more indifferent to spiritual matters. After I graduated high school, my principal values were earning money, building my business, playing music and drinking.

My uncontrolled downward spiral into alcohol addiction produced more and more horrendous results and troubles in my life and consequently in the lives of others. I was steadily and alarmingly doing things that were far removed from what I knew to be the right and godly way of living.

In 1978 God mercifully gave me a moment of clarity and a new vision of myself and what He had originally intended for me. I desperately needed the forgiveness of Christ as illustrated in His Parable of the Prodigal Son. God showed me that Christ offers me a better life, and that He died on the cross to give me the hope of eternal life. He is still my only hope of surviving, spiritually and physically. He gave me the desire to go to any lengths necessary to recommit my life to Him. He gave me the will to ask Him to do for me what I could not do for myself; to free me from my addiction to alcohol and restore me to a right relationship with God, and security to be in His presence forever. He also revealed to me that I can do nothing to “earn” a place in Heaven, that it is God’s free gift to me if I believe and trust Jesus and His sacrifice for me.

God did remove my desire for alcohol and the life style it offered. I was in awe of a God Who could and would (and did) forgive me and heal my body and soul despite the way I had mistreated my “temple” for those past 25 years. I asked God to change me, and I became willing to do whatever He required.

God moved me to recommit my life to Christ, and to make Him first and foremost in my life. My desires now are to continue to seek God’s will for me through the Scriptures, and to be committed to God’s work of witnessing, as described in the Gospel of Christ. I ask God daily to show me His will for me and to help me to keep my priorities straight. I have had spiritual setbacks, but none that have caused me to go back to my addiction and all its accompanying sins.

I am so grateful that God didn't give up on me. Instead, God has given me a fascination with His word and a dedication to studying His word. He also gave me a new approach to studying His word; to analyze it verse by verse, and with the aid of several good study guides, to write my own paraphrase, my own version or "take" on what He revealed to me. I shared some of these paraphrases and was encouraged to continue to study this way. I began to post a chapter every week on a special "Word on the Street" Facebook page.

With the help of my friend and brother Jim McMurry, I now move to a new phase of sharing my scripture studies with others. I pray you will read with a renewed interest, the greatest and most important book ever written.

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Bob Boyd at the “Afterthought” 2005

.....Watercolor by Jim McMurry

# ESTHER

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## INTRODUCTION

The Book of Esther tells how God again saved His chosen people from being totally wiped out.

### FUN THINGS TO KNOW AND TELL ABOUT THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

- 1 Esther is one of only 2 Bible books with womens' names.
- 2 Esther is not mentioned in the New Testament.
- 3 Her Hebrew name was Hadassah, which means Myrtle.
- 4 Esther is Persian for "star" or phony love-god "Ishtar."
- 5 She was an orphan raised in Persia by her cousin Mordecai.
- 6 Nobody knows who wrote "Esther." Maybe Mordecia, Ezra or Nehemiah?
- 7 Whoever wrote it knew a lot about Persian customs, etiquette and history, and the Shushan Palace.
- 8 He also knew about the Hebrew calendar and customs. Maybe a Persian Jew who returned to Israel later?
- 9 Esther is the last of the Old Testament "history" books. It covers 10 years, 483 to 473 B.C. while King Ahaseurus (his Greek name was "Xerxes") was still alive. (Somebody offed him in 465 B.C.)
- 10 There is no mention of "God" or "Prayer" in Esther.

## CHAPTER 1

### Queen Vashti gets kicked out for not following the king's orders.

**Verses 1-4:** There was a king named Ahaseurus who reigned over 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia, over 2 million square miles. His headquarters were in the fortified palace at Shushan. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of his reign, he threw a huge feast for all the important high-ranking nobles, princes and officials of Persia and Media. The party went on for 6 months, while he showed off all the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendor of his excellent majesty. *(Note: Ahaseurus/Xerxes may have been gathering his allies' military forces for another invasion of Greece.)*

**Verses 5-6:** Then at the end, the king threw another week-long party for all the palace regulars, in the garden court. The furnishings were elegant and dramatic. White and blue linen curtains *(the royal colors)* with purple cords on silver rods and marble pillars. There were gold and silver couches on a mosaic pavement of alabaster, turquoise, white and black marble.

**Verse 7:** There was plenty of the king's wine, served in gold goblets that were all different.

**Verse 8:** The law said the guests didn't have to drink. The king told his household heads, "Everybody's free to drink or not drink."

**Verse 9:** At the same time, Queen Vashti was throwing a big feast for the palace womenfolks. *(Note: Vashti was the mother of the next king, Artaxerxes.)*

**Verses 10-11:** On the last day of the week long feast for the locals, when the king was drunk with wine, he made a bad move. He ordered his 7 eunuchs *(man servants who had been castrated, so they wouldn't get ideas and try to start their own dynasty)* to go fetch Queen Vashti and bring her front and center, wearing her royal crown. He wanted to show all his guests how drop-dead gorgeous she was.

**Verse 12:** But she told the eunuchs, "No, I'm not going with y'all." When the king, who was used to getting whatever he wanted, heard that, he blew his lid and lost his temper. *(Note: We don't know why she wouldn't go. Maybe she didn't want to put on a show for a houseful of drunks, or maybe she was still pregnant with Artaxerxes. Who knows?)*

**Verses 13-14:** So the king turned to his 7 wise guys, the highest-ranking princes, who had a handle on what was going on. They were his board of law advisors.

**Verse 15:** "What does the law say we gotta do about Queen Vashti?" he asked. "She didn't obey my order to come to my party!"

**Verse 16:** Memucan spoke up. "She hasn't insulted just you, king. She has insulted all us princes and the people all over your vast empire!"

**Verses 17-18:** "When all the wives hear that the queen refused to obey your order, they'll hate their husbands and stop obeying them. Today, the royal ladies of Persia and Media will tell your officials, 'Yeah, we heard how Queen Vashti failed to obey the King's orders,' and they will hold you in anger and contempt."

**Verse 19:** "If you think we're right, send out a royal decree. Write it into the laws of the Persians and Medes, so it can't be changed. 'Vashti will never again come before King Ahaseurus.' Then you will give her royal position to somebody who is better than Vashti."



**Verse 20:** When the King's decree is proclaimed throughout all your huge, vast empire, all wives great and small, will honor their husbands." *(Note: Maybe they were all still drunk.)*

**Verses 21-22:** The king liked their idea, so he sent letters out to all his provinces, each letter in their peoples' own language. It said "Every man will be the master of his own home." *(Note: a vast relay system of horsemen carried the letters and got the word out swiftly to everybody in the king's empire.)*

## CHAPTER 2

### The King Picks a New Queen

**Verse 1:** When the king cooled off, he remembered Vashti. But he couldn't bring her back, because he had made her banishment a royal law. *(Note: This was about 2 years later, after his attempt to invade Greece was beaten back by a greatly outnumbered army of Greek patriots. They were determined to hold onto their freedom no matter what. It was kind of like our patriots in our war against Great Britain for our independence.)*

**Verses 2-3:** His servants, *(Note: the 7 princes?)* suggested, "Why don't you appoint officers in all your provinces to round up all the pretty young virgin girls and bring them to your Shushan Palace? Put them in the womens' quarters with Hegai as the head eunuch in charge. Give them lots of cosmetics and training to fix themselves up.

**Verse 4:** "Then check them all out and pick the one you like best, to be your new queen." That sounded like a good idea to King Ahaseurus, so that's what he ordered.

**Verse 5:** In Shushan, there was a Jew named "Mordecai." *(That was his Persian name, after their phony god "Marduk.")* He was of Benjamin's tribe.

**Verse 6:** His great-grandfather, Kish, was one of the Jews taken captive from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, when Jeconiah was king of Judah.

**Verse 7:** Mordecai had adopted his uncle's orphaned daughter, Hadassah, *("Myrtle" in Hebrew, "Esther" in Persian)* who was a lovely and beautiful young woman.

**Verse 8:** Esther was included when the young women were rounded up and taken to Shushan. They were all put under Hegai the head eunuch's custody.

**Verse 9:** Hegai was pleased with Esther, so he gave her all kinds of cosmetics and nourishment. She was also assigned 7 hand-picked maid servants from the king's palace. They were all moved into the best rooms in the womens' house.

**Verse 10:** Mordecai had warned Esther to not let on that she was Jewish, so she kept her lip zipped.

**Verse 11:** Mordecai paced up and down every day in front of the womens' quarters' court. He was keeping tabs on what was going on with Esther. *(Note: God had big plans for Esther, as we see in these events as they unfold.)*

**Verse 12:** Each young woman *(Note: about 400 had been rounded up)* spent 6 months treating herself with Myrrh oil, then 6 months of perfumes and beautifying cosmetics. After preparing herself for a full year, each young woman got her turn to go see King Ahasuerus.

**Verse 13:** She was given whatever she wanted to take with her, when she took her turn going in to see the King.

**Verse 14:** She would go in the evening, then return to the 2<sup>nd</sup> womens' house, into the custody of Shaashgaz, the King's eunuch in charge of the concubines. She never got to go back to the King unless he liked her so much he would call for her by her name.

**Verse 15:** When Esther's turn came, she only took with her what Hegai her eunuch boss advised. Everybody who saw Esther like her right away. *(Note: That was the Lord's*

*plan for her.)*

**Verse 16:** Esther's turn to go to the king, came in the 10<sup>th</sup> Persian month, called "Tebeth." That was in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Ahasuerus's reign.

**Verse 17:** *(Note: It had been 4 years since the King kicked Vashti out of the palace.)* Well, Esther went in, and the King loved her more than all the other women, so he set the royal crown on her head, and she took Vashti's place as his queen. *(Note: Esther was still keeping her Jewishness secret.)*

**Verse 18:** Then the King threw a big party for all his officials and servants. He declared a holiday in all his provinces, and gave out presents fit for a king to give. *(Note: the "holiday" probably included no taxes due and/or release from the military.)*

**Verses 19-21:** *(Note: It is likely Mordecai had a prominent position as judge at the gate.)* While Mordecai was sitting in the King's gate, he overheard Bigthan and Jeresh, 2 of the King's eunuch gate guards, talking about grabbing and killing the King. *(Note: Maybe they wanted revenge because of the way the King treated Queen Vashti.)*

**Verse 22:** Mordecai told Esther about the plot he had heard, and Esther told the King what Mordecai had heard.

**Verse 23:** When the King investigated and learned it was true, he had the 2 eunuchs hanged on a gallows. *(Note: Or impaled on a "pole," a common form of execution in Persia.)*

## CHAPTER 3:

### Bad News for all the Jews.

**Verses 1-2:** Sometime between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, the King promoted Haman the Agagite to 2<sup>nd</sup> in command, above all his princes, and ordered all his servants to bow to Haman and honor him. But Mordecai would not. *(Note: There was a longstanding family feud between Mordecai's Benjamite family and the descendants of King Agag. Read the story in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 15.)*

**Verse 3:** The servants in the gate area, where Mordecai worked as a judge, asked him over and over, "Mordecai, why are you going against the King's orders?"

**Verse 4:** Finally, the servants went to Haman and ratted Mordecai out. *(Note: Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew, although he was not a practicing Jew, perhaps as an excuse for not bowing to Haman.)*

**Verses 5-6:** When Haman saw that Mordecai wouldn't honor him, he flew into a rage. But he wasn't satisfied to just punish Mordecai. He decided to kill all the Jews in Ahasuerus's entire kingdom. *(Note: They already hated all the Jews.)*

**Verse 7:** It was in the month of Nisan, in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the King's reign, that Haman and his crew rolled the "Pur," a kind of dice, to see in what month they would kill all the Jews. *(Note: They were a superstitious bunch who believed in astrology.)* The dice came up in the month of Adar, 11 months down the road. *(Note: God controls the way the dice, or "lots" come up. Check Proverbs 16:33! The mass murder plot would include all the Jews who had returned to Palestine and were there worshiping God rightly in their rebuilt temple. God controls all events, sometimes in big ways. But often, He works behind the scenes with the "happenstances.")*

**Verse 8:** Then Haman told King A., "King, there's a race of folks scattered through all your provinces. Their laws are different, and they don't obey your laws. So it's not a good idea to leave them alone. *(Note: That was a lie. Many Jews were good subjects and obeyed the king's laws. And Haman didn't tell the King they were Jews.)*

**Verse 9:** "Why don't you write a decree to have them all destroyed? I'll give 10,000 talents of silver *(about 375 tons!)* out of my own pocket, to the men who do the work." *(Note: The killers. The money and valuables would be stolen from the murdered Jews, who had become prosperous.)*

**Verses 10-11:** So the King gave Haman his signet ring, and said, "You've got the money and the workers. Now go do whatever you want." *(Note: He was glad to get rid of anybody who rebelled, but didn't really seem to care about the money. Haman must have been very wealthy himself, to up-front the huge silver budget. He also hated the Jews so much, he didn't care what it would cost him. He even told the King the wealth plundered from the Jews would go into the king's treasury. Haman is called "the Jews' enemy" 5 times in the story of Esther. And the king still didn't know that he had just condemned his new queen Esther, secretly a Jew, to death.)*

**Verse 12:** On the 13<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, the king's scribes wrote up an order to the king's satraps, governors and officials in every province, each in their own language, and sealed with the king's ring.

**Verse 13:** The letters were sent by "pony express," swift delivery riders on horseback, all over the kingdom. It read, "On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of Adar, you are ordered to kill, destroy and

annihilate all the Jews, young and old, kids and women, all in one day, and steal and collect everything they own. *(Note: Historians have figured out that date was March 7, 473 B.C. The king had unknowingly condemned his new queen, Esther, to be murdered.)*

**Verse 14:** A copy was published and posted everywhere, so everybody could be ready for that day. It was the king's law, so it could not be changed.

**Verse 15:** The riders dashed out to deliver the king's order. It was also published and proclaimed in Sushan. Then the king and Haman sat down to have a few drinks. But the Shushan folks were puzzled. *(Note: Probably at the extreme, deadly racism of the king and Haman. Maybe they wondered, "Will we be next?")*

## CHAPTER 4:

### Esther to the Rescue

**Verses 1-2:** When Mordecai heard all that, he ripped his clothes and put on burlap clothes and threw ashes on his head. He went out into the city and hollered and moaned and wept in great distress. He stopped in front of the king's gate; nobody could pass there wearing burlap and ashes. *(Note: Mordecai knew he had caused Haman to enact this holocaust.)*

**Verse 3:** That's not all. In every province, the Jews were mourning, weeping, wailing and not eating. Many of them lay in burlap and ashes.

**Verse 4:** Esther's maids and eunuchs told her about Mordecai, and it ruined her day, too. She sent clothes to him, but he wouldn't put them on and clean up his act.

**Verses 5-6:** So Esther called Hathach, a Eunuch who was in charge of her. She ordered Hathach to go to Mordecai, and find out what was the big deal that was causing him to freak out. So Hathach went to Mordecai, who was in front of the king's gate.

**Verses 7-9:** Mordecai laid it all out for him, how Haman had promised to put big bucks into the king's treasury so Haman could wipe out all the Jews. Mordecai even gave Hathach a copy of the letter that ordered their destruction. "Go give this to Esther," he said, and explain it, and tell her to go to the king and plead for him to not kill all her people. *(Note: If Hathach didn't already know Esther was a Jewess, he knew it now!)* So Hathach went and relayed to Queen Esther, all that Mordecai had told him.

**Verses 10-12:** Esther sent Hathach back with orders for Mordecai: "Everybody knows that if anybody shows up to see the king without an invitation, they will die by the king's one law. That is, unless he points his golden scepter at them. Then they can keep on living." *(Note: This rule was to protect the king from unwanted visitors, possibly assassins.)*

**Verses 13-14:** So Mordecai sent word back to Esther, "Hey. Don't think you're safe in the king's palace. You're just another Jew to him. If you don't speak up, God will come up with another way to save the Jews. But you and your family will die anyway. Yet, who knows if maybe God has put you where you are, for His purposes? *(Note: It sounds like Mordecai knew and believed God's promise to Abraham to protect His people, the Jews.)*

**Verses 15-16:** Here was Esther's message back to Mordecai: "Go round up all the Jews here in Shushan. Tell them to stop eating or drinking for 3 days. My maids and I will fast, too. Then I'll break the law and go see the king. If I die, I die!"

**Verse 17:** So Mordecai followed Esther's orders. *(Note: prayer is not mentioned her, but no doubt it was included. Why fast without praying?)*



## CHAPTER 5:

### *Esther Saves Her People, by God's Unmerited Favor*

**Verses 1-2:** On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of their fast, Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house. The king was sitting on his throne, facing the front door of the royal house, so he saw Esther, and held out his golden scepter to her. So Esther came in and touched the scepter. *(Note: she had first found favor with the God of Israel.)*

**Verse 3:** The king asked her, "Queen Esther, whatever you want, it's yours, up to half my kingdom, that is." *(Note: This was a common exaggeration, not to be taken seriously.)*

**Verse 4:** Esther answered, "If it's okay with you, king, I'd like for you and Haman to come to the big dinner party I've set out today."

**Verse 5:** Then the king ordered, "Hey! Go get Haman, so he can do what Esther said!" So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's feast. *(Note: That was quite an honor, to dine alone with the king and queen!)*

**Verses 6-7:** At the banquet, wine was served. The king repeated his promise to do whatever Esther wanted. So here's what Esther said:

**Verse 8:** "If you like me, and if it's okay with you, and you want to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then you and Haman come to another feast I'm giving tomorrow. Then I'll make my request." *(Note: Was Esther still fearful? Or was she holding off her request to raise the king's anticipation level? Either way, in view of what happened next, she was following God's leading.)*

**Verse 9:** Haman left the first banquet as happy as a lark. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate, Mordecai didn't stand up or bow or act afraid of him. That greatly offended Haman.

**Verse 10:** But he kept his cool, went home and called for all his buddies to come over. Then they went into a huddle with Zeresh, his wife.

**Verse 11:** Haman bragged to them about how rich he was, how many kids he had (10 sons,) and how the king had promoted him above the king's officials and servants.

**Verses 12-13:** "And that's not all!" He boasted. "The king and I were the only ones invited to Queen Esther's feast today. And, I'm invited to another queen's dinner party tomorrow! But when I see Mordecai sitting there at the king's gate, it just ruins everything for me!"

**Verse 14:** Then, His wife Zeresh and all his buddies gave Haman a great idea. "Tomorrow morning, order a huge tall gallows to be built. Make it 75 feet high! Then suggest that the king should hang Mordecai on it. Then you can relax and go enjoy your banquet with the king and queen!" That sounded like a plan to Haman, so he ordered the gallows to be built. *(Note: the "gallows" was actually a sharp pole where the condemned man would be impaled, higher than all the trees, for all to see.)*

## CHAPTER 6:

### The King (finally!) Honors Mordecai.

**Verse 1:** That night, the king was tossing and turning and couldn't go to sleep. So he ordered a guy to go get the journal of the events of his reign, and read it to him.

**Verse 2:** His servant was reading what had happened 5 years earlier, when Mordecai had blown the whistle on Bigthan and Teresh, his eunuch gate guards. He had heard them plotting to off the king.

**Verse 3:** "What have we done, to reward Mordecai for saving my life?" His servant answered, "Nothing!" *(Note: Do you keep seeing God's hand intervening? He gave the king insomnia. The king called for the journal to be read and learned of his oversight of Mordecai, and wanted to reward him. Read on!)*

**Verse 4:** "Who's in the courtyard?" the king asked. Haman had just "happened" to walk into the outer court yard. He was coming to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on his newly built gallows.

**Verse 5:** The king's servants said, "Haman is here, standing out in the courtyard. "Let him come on in," the king ordered.

**Verse 6:** Haman came in. "What do we need to do, to honor the man I am delighted with?" the king asked him. Haman thought, "He's got to be talking about me! Who else?"

**Verses 7-8:** *(Note: Haman began to describe how he would like to be honored, thinking the king was talking about him. What an ego, and what a greedy guy! He had all the money and honor but still wanted more.)* "Bring him one of your own robes you have worn, and a horse you have ridden, with the royal crest on the horse's head.

**Verse 9:** "Have royal princes dress him up like royalty, then parade him on horseback through the city, proclaiming who he is, and why he is being so honored."

**Verse 10:** The king told Haman, "Wow! That sounds like a good plan! Go get the robe and horse, and do everything you said, for Mordecai the Jew! He's sitting right out there by my gate!"

**Verse 11:** Haman had no choice but to carry out his own plan, but for Mordecai, the man he hated. He took the robe and horse, dressed Mordecai and led him on horseback through town, proclaiming "This is the man the king delights to honor!"

**Verse 12:** Then Mordecai went back to the gate. But Haman hurried home with his head covered in shame and embarrassment, moaning and groaning.

**Verse 13:** When Haman told his wife and buddies what had happened, they said, "If Mordecai is a Jew, you're not gonna come out well. He's gonna win." *(Note: It sounds like they knew the Jews were God's people.)*

**Verse 14:** While they were still talking, the king's eunuchs came and got Haman and hurried him to Esther's 2<sup>nd</sup> banquet.

## CHAPTER 7

### HAMAN THE BAD GUY GETS HIS.

**Verses 1-2:** So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's 2<sup>nd</sup> feast. The king asked Esther for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time, "Now, tell me. What is it you want, Queen Esther? Whatever it is, I'll do it. Up to half the kingdom, that is."

**Verses 3-4:** This time, the Queen answered. "If you like me, and if it's okay with you, my king, let me and all my people live. We've been sold, to be destroyed, killed and wiped out. If we had just been sold to be slaves, I wouldn't speak up, although the enemy doesn't have enough money to pay for all you will lose." *(Note: We still don't know if Haman knew Esther was Mordecai's cousin.)*

**Verse 5:** "Who and where is the guy who would even dream of doing such an evil thing?" asked King Ahaseurus.

**Verse 6:** "The enemy among us is that evil Haman!" said Queen Esther. Now, Haman had guilt written all over his face. He was really shaking in his boots, for fear of what the king and queen might do to him.

**Verse 7:** The king was so mad, he got up from the banquet and walked into the palace garden. But Haman stood pleading with Esther for his life. He knew he was a goner.

**Verse 8:** When the king came back in to the banquet hall, Haman was lying across Esther on her couch. "Is Haman even going to attack the queen while I'm right here in the house?" *(Note: We're not told why the king walked out. But it so happened, when he walked back in, Haman was lying on Esther, and the king thought the worst, although they were not alone in the banquet hall. We also don't know why they covered Haman's guilty face, unless they were collaring him for his punishment to come.)*

**Verse 9:** Then Harbona, a king's eunuch, said, "Look, king! There's a 75-foot-high gallows Haman built in his yard, to hang Mordecai!" *(Note: It may have been visible from everywhere in the city!)* The king said, "Go hang Haman on it!"

**Verse 10:** So they hanged (*impaled*) Haman on the gallows he intended for Mordecai. Then the king's temper cooled off. *(Note: The charges/counts against Haman were 1. He manipulated the king to kill all the Jews. 2. He appeared to attack the queen. 3. He planned to execute the man who had saved the king from assassination.)*

## CHAPTER 8:

### ESTHER AND THE JEWS

**Verse 1:** That same day, the king gave all of Haman's wealth to Esther. She told the king that Mordecai was her cousin. **Verse 2:** King Xerxes had taken his signet ring away from Haman. Now he gave it to Mordecai, and Esther appointed Mordecai to rule over Haman's estate. *(Note: What happened to Haman's wife Zeresh or Zerek we don't know. His 10 sons died later. That's in Esther 9:7-10.)* **Verse 3:** Now it was Esther's turn to act again. She went uninvited to the king, fell at his feet, and tearfully begged him to counteract Haman's evil scheme to kill all the Jews. **Verses 4-6:** Lucky for Esther, the king pointed his gold scepter at her, so she stood up and said, "If it's okay with you, my king, and if you still like me a lot, and it sounds like a good idea to you, how about writing a letter to revoke Haman's plan to kill all the Jews in your kingdom? I just don't know how I can endure seeing all my people murdered!" **Verse 7:** So then, the king told Esther and Mordecai, "Yes, I gave Haman's estate to you, Esther. They impaled Haman on his own gallows pole because he tried to kill all you Jews. **Verse 8:** "So, y'all go write out exactly what you want for the Jews. Sign and seal it with my name. That way, nobody can revoke it." **Verses 9-14:** Then the king's secretaries were called in, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month of Sivan. They wrote it all out as Mordecai dictated. It was then sent to the Jews, satraps, governors and princes in the 127 states, from India to Ethiopia. Mordecai sealed it in the king's name with his official signet ring, and sent letters by curriers on swift, royal horses. *(Note: The decree gave the Jews a little over 9 months to get ready to defend themselves. It gave them the right to protect themselves, to wipe out and plunder any group that fought against them. They could take away their enemies' property, like Mordecai had taken Haman's estate.)* **Verse 15:** So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king wearing royal blue and white finery, with fine purple and linen, and a huge gold crown on his head. **Verses 16-17:** Shushan city really celebrated! The Jews especially were having a happy field day, with feasts and holidays. A lot of non-Jews were so impressed with the Jews' God, they became Jews. Then they were safe, too!

## CHAPTER 9

### THE JEWS, WITH GOD'S HELP, TURN THE TABLES ON THEIR ENEMIES

**Verse 1:** When the fateful day of 13 Adar rolled around, the Jews (with God's help,) turned the tables on their enemies and overwhelmed them. **Verse 2:** The Jews organized in every city and glommed onto their attackers. Nobody could stand against them, because their enemies feared them. **Verses 3-5:** Even all the officials helped the Jews, because they were afraid of Mordecai. He was now the king's number 1 man. He became famous and prominent and had a good reputation all over the vast kingdom. That is how the Jews defeated all their enemies. *(Note: God kept His promise, as always, to protect and preserve His chosen people.)* **Verses 6-10:** In Shushan, the capitol city, the Jews killed and destroyed 500 men. They also killed Haman's 10 sons. But, they didn't take any of their stuff! **Verses 11-12:** When the king heard the Shushan death toll report, he asked Queen Esther, "Now, what else do you want? Whatever it is, you've got it." **Verse 13:** "If it's okay with you, king," Esther said, "Let the Jews keep killing their enemies for one more day, and let Haman's 10 sons be impaled on the gallows and displayed before the people." *(Note: That was common practice in Persia, to make them visible examples of the king's punishment.)* **Verses 14-15:** And the king kept his word and ordered it done. 300 more of the Jews' enemies were killed, but the Jews didn't touch any of their stuff. Haman's 10 sons were impaled. **Verses 16-18:** As for all the Jews in all the other states, they organized and killed 75,000 of their enemies in one day, but they never laid a hand on any of their enemies' stuff. That happened on Adar the 13<sup>th</sup>. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, they took a break, and made it a holiday of feasting, gift-giving and joy! **Verses 19-20:** In Shushan, the Jews celebrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Adar, by feasting and giving gifts. Mordecai wrote letters to all the Jews in the kingdom, near and far, to make Adar the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> a celebration of God's rescue of all the Jews, every year from then on. **Verses 21-28:** *(Note: these verses are a recap of how the Feast of Purim was established for all Jews. The reason it's called "Purim" is that Haman cast the "pur" dice to choose the day of destruction. God used the pur, and many other seeming "coincidences," to save His chosen people's lives.)* **Verses 29-32:** Esther wrote a second letter with Mordecai confirming that every Jew in the kingdom was required to observe the Feast of Purim holidays.

## CHAPTER 10

### Wrapping Up the Story of Esther

**Verses 1-2:** King Ahaseurus (Xerxes) taxed all his kingdom, including the islands. This whole story about how great the king and Mordecai were, is written in the history of the Medes and Persians.

**Verse 3:** For Mordecai was second in command and was great among his fellow Jews. They liked him because he was looking out for their good and keeping the peace.

*(Note: In less than 10 years, about 465 B.C., assassins offed king Ahaseurus. That's all we know about Mordecai and Esther. We are left with this list of facts:*

- 1 God protected His people, often when they didn't even know it.*
- 2 Many things happened controlled only by God, who oversees history.*
- 3 Vashti was deposed so Esther could be queen and save her people.*
- 4 Haman's life did a 180, from honored, to dead because of his own greed and malice.*
- 5 Mordecai's life did a 180 from disaster to honor.*
- 6 A death decree was reversed by a decree that destroyed 76,000 of the Jews' enemies.*
- 7 The Feast of Purim holiday reminds the Jews every year that God is in control, and people should worship and faithfully serve their great God.)*





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