

Queen Esther

Esther becomes queen (Esther 1:1 - 2:23)
The Jews are threatened (Esther 3:1 - 4:17)
Esther intercedes for the Jews (Esther 5:1 - 8:17)
The Jews are delivered (Esther 9:1 - 10:3)

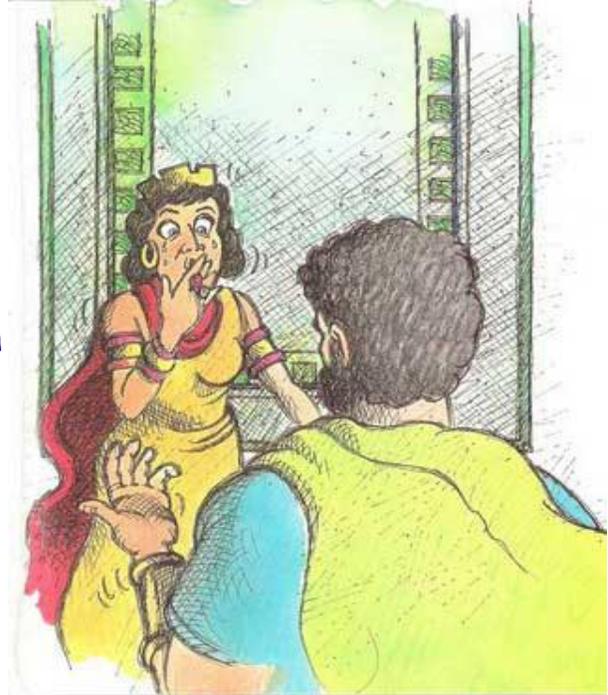


King Xerxes ruled over the mighty land of Persia. When he needed a wife, his servants searched the land for the most beautiful women. They brought these women to the palace so the king could choose his bride. A woman named Esther was chosen. She was good and wise and very

beautiful. But she was an Israelite. A kind relative named Mordecai had adopted Esther as a child, and raised her as his own daughter. He warned her not to tell anyone she was an Israelite.

When King Xerxes saw Esther, he was very pleased! He set the royal crown on her head, and she became his wife and queen. Then the king gave a big party to celebrate!

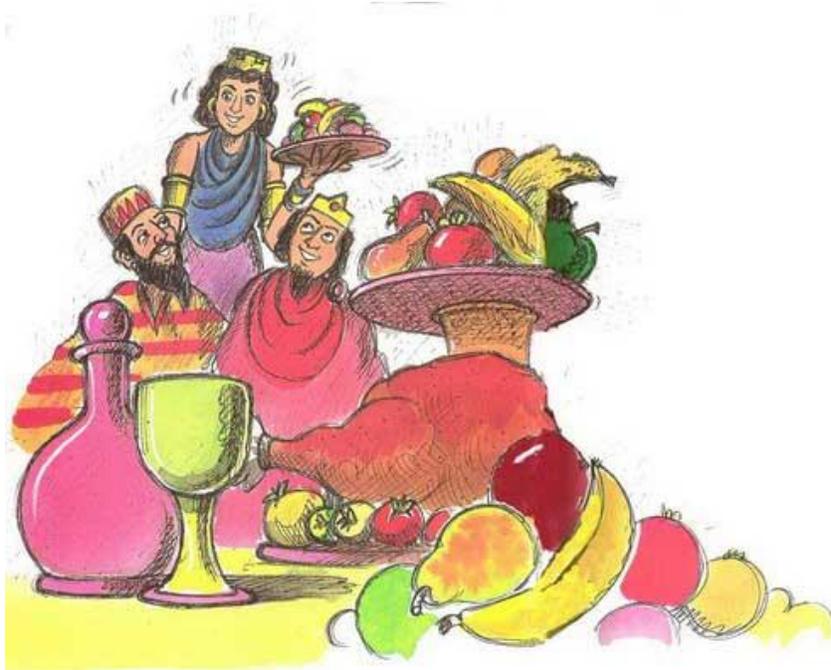
Mordecai often sat by the palace gates to hear how Esther was doing. One time, he overheard men plotting to kill the king. Mordecai warned Esther, and she told the king. The bad men were arrested, and Mordecai's good deed was written in the king's record book.



Later on, a powerful man named Haman became angry at Mordecai. Haman knew that Mordecai was an Israelite, and he encouraged King Xerxes to make it legal to kill all Israelites.

Esther knew this law meant that she too must die. "I will do all I can to change this," she said to Mordecai. " Even if it means that I am killed. Please ask my people to pray for me."

And Mordecai did.



Esther wanted to speak to the king. When King Xerxes saw her, he asked, "What can I do for you, dear Queen? I will give you whatever you ask, up to half my kingdom."

"I have prepared a banquet for you and Haman. I would like you to be my guests," said Esther.

So the king and Haman came and enjoyed a delicious meal served by Esther. "Now, dear Queen, tell me what it is I can do for you," said King Xerxes.

"If you both could come for another feast tomorrow," said Esther, "then I will tell you my request."

The next day, King Xerxes and Haman came to another fine banquet. "Now, tell me, my Queen, what is your request?" said King Xerxes. "What can I give to you?"

"Dear King," said Esther. "If you are pleased with me, I beg you to spare my life. And also spare the lives of my people. If we were to be sold as slaves, I would not have bothered you, but it seems unfair that we are to be put to death."

"Who dares to do this?" demanded the king.

"It is this cruel Haman," said Esther, pointing to her enemy. The king ordered Haman to be hung that very same day.

Esther and her people were safe!



This May Be Your Chance

When Mordecai asked for Esther's help, he assured her that God was going to bring his people through the difficulties they faced. If Esther refused, then she would receive punishment along with the people who wanted to kill the Jews. But Mordecai also challenged Esther. Perhaps this was the reason the LORD had placed her in the position of being a favored queen.

It took courage and boldness for Esther to approach the king without being invited. She was literally risking her life. We, too, may have to risk all that is dear to us when we speak up for what is right. But, like Esther, we can be sure that the results of our efforts are in God's hands - even if it costs us our lives to do what is right. When we trust God, things in our lives don't happen by accident. You may be in the place where you are "for a time like this".