

Esther

Esther 1–10

And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight . . . so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen. Esther 2:17

Several years after Jerusalem was conquered and the Jews were taken captive, a young Jewish woman named Esther performed a great service for her people. Esther was a remarkable young woman who “obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her” (Esther 2:15).

A time came when King Ahasuerus of Persia and Media wanted to find a queen for his country (see Esther 2:3–4). Mordecai, who had raised Esther after her parents died, worked in the king’s palace, so he brought her into the king’s house (see Esther 2:5, 7–8). Esther impressed the king, and he “loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight . . . so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen” (Esther 2:17).

Within a few years, Haman, a powerful adviser to the king, became angry when Mordecai would not bow down to him. Haman wanted to kill Mordecai and used lies to convince the king that all the Jews in the kingdom should be destroyed. (See Esther 3:2–6, 8–9.)

The king sent messengers throughout the land ordering all Jews to be killed (see Esther 3:13). Queen Esther sent a servant to Mordecai to learn what had happened. After he explained Haman’s plan of destruction, he sent a message urging Esther to plead with the king in behalf of her people. (See Esther 4:5, 7–8.)

The request frightened Esther. The king had made a law that if someone came into the inner court who had not been called there, the king could have that person killed (see Esther 4:11). However, Mordecai encouraged Esther to see the king. He said, “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14).

Esther sent a message back to Mordecai asking him, along with all the other Jews, to join her in three days of fasting and prayer (see Esther 4:16).

King Ahasuerus did not know Esther was Jewish, so he did not know his decree would mean the death of his wife (see Esther 2:10). After fasting and praying for God’s help, Esther went to the inner court to speak to the king. Ahasuerus welcomed her and promised to grant any request she had. (See Esther 5:1–3.)

Esther’s request was simple: she invited Ahasuerus and Haman to a banquet. At the banquet Ahasuerus asked Esther what he could do for her. She replied, “Let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request” (Esther 7:3). When the king heard everything Esther told him, he ordered Haman to be hung on the gallows Haman had built to hang Mordecai on (see Esther 7:5–9).

Esther risked her life to go before King Ahasuerus. Because of her faith in God and the fasting and prayers of the Jews, they were saved from destruction and became more prosperous in the land (see Esther 10:3).

Summary

Esther, a beautiful Jewish woman of great faith and courage, married the king of Persia. Haman, one of the king’s servants, was angry because a Jewish man refused to bow down to him. The servant wanted all the Jews to be killed. The king, not knowing that

Queen Esther was Jewish, agreed to the plan to kill all the Jews. After asking her people to fast and pray for three days, Esther risked her life to go to the king and ask him to save her people. He granted her plea, and the Jews were saved from death.

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