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READING

# Esther Saves Her People



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# Esther Saves Her People



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Soon after Esther became queen of Persia, there began to be trouble. Haman, the prime minister, did not like Mordecai. He began plotting to kill not only Mordecai, but also his people, the Jews.

Haman told the king, "There are some people in your kingdom who do not obey your laws. Perhaps you should make a law to destroy them." Then the king gave Haman his royal ring. "Do as you please," he said.

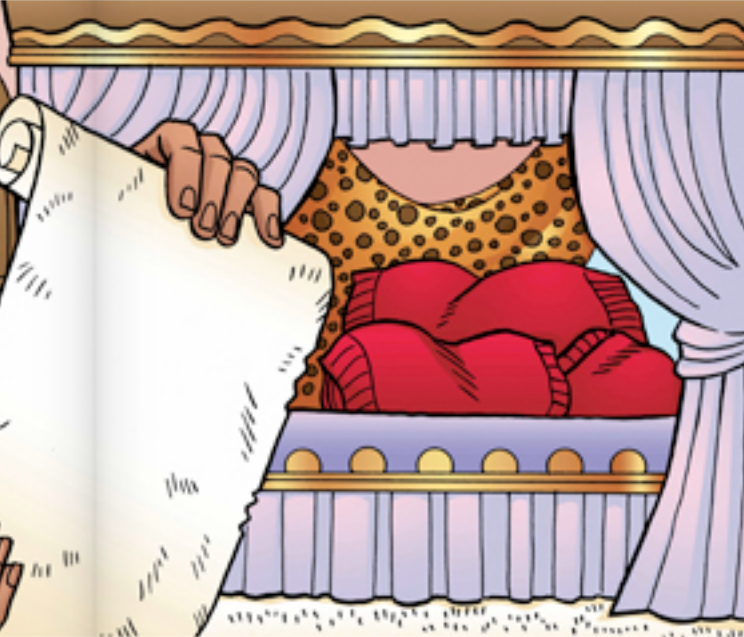


Haman wrote a law that all the Jews would be killed on a certain day. He sealed the law with the king's royal ring.

The king's messengers spread the news. As they heard it, the Jews wept. Mordecai was so upset, he tore his clothes. He put on sackcloth and ashes.



Mordecai rushed a message to Esther. He told her to ask the king for mercy. Esther replied, "Anyone who approaches the king without being called is killed!



They are only spared if the king holds out his golden scepter." Mordecai wrote back, "Who knows but that you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"





Esther replied, "Gather all the Jews together and pray for me. Do not eat for three days. Then I will go to the king — and if I perish, I perish."

And all the Jews did as Esther asked. On the third day, Esther put on her royal robes and walked into the king's hall.



When the king saw Esther, he was pleased. He held out his golden scepter. Esther came forward and touched it.

"What is your request, Queen Esther?" asked the king.  
"I will give it to you, even up to half of my kingdom!"



"If it pleases the king," said Esther, "let the king and Haman come to a banquet that I have prepared for him." "Bring Haman at once!" said the king.

As they were drinking wine, the king said, "Now tell me what you really want. I will give it to you, even up to half of my kingdom!"





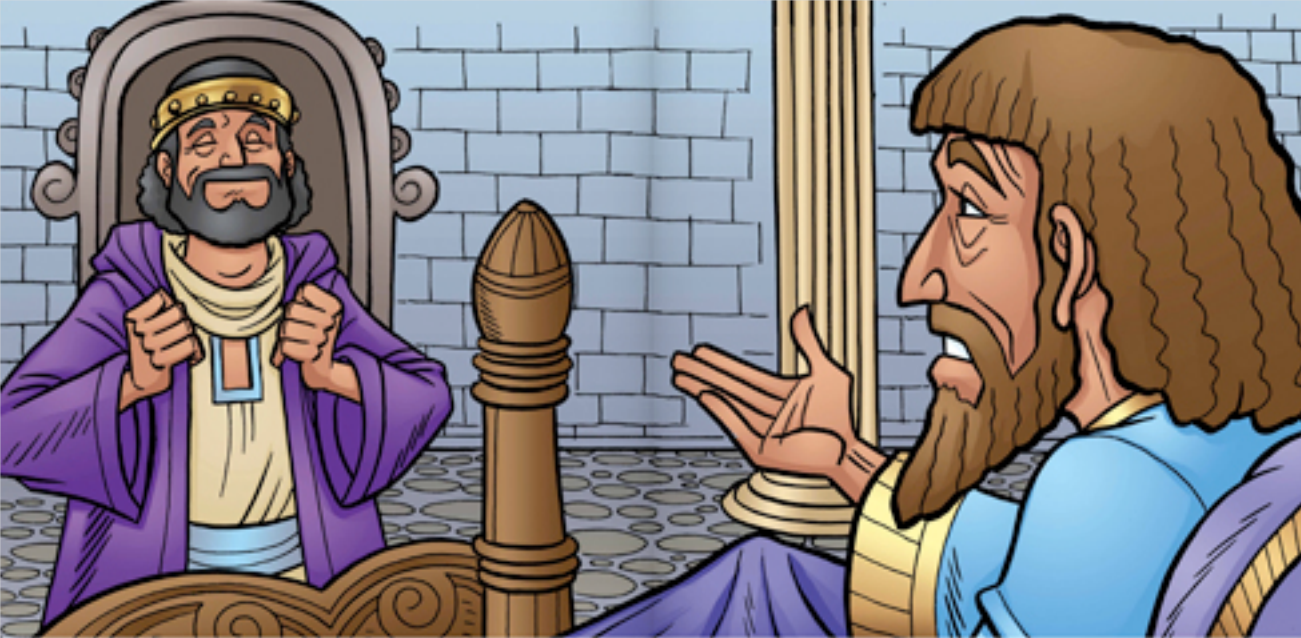
"If the king loves me, and wants to grant my request," said Esther, "then come again with Haman tomorrow to

the banquet I shall prepare. Tomorrow I will explain what this is all about."



That night the king had trouble sleeping. He called for his book of historical records and began to read.

Soon he read of the time Mordecai had saved his life. The king asked, "What was done to honor this man?" "Nothing," said his servants.



"Who is on duty in the outer court," the king asked. The servants said, "Haman has just arrived."

So the king called Haman into his room. "What should be done for a man the king wants to honor?" he asked.



Haman was certain that the king was wanting to honor him. "Put the king's robe on him," said Haman. "Place the king's ring on his hand."

"Then have a high official lead him through the streets on the king's horse, shouting, 'This is the man the king wishes to honor!'"





The answer pleased the king greatly. "Good!" he said. "Go and do this for Mordecai, the Jew who sits at the king's gate!"

Haman was very unhappy. He had to lead Mordecai through the city shouting, "This is the man that the king wishes to honor!"



Soon it was time for the banquet. "Now, Queen Esther, what is your request?" said the king. "I will give it to you, even up to half of my kingdom!"

Then Esther said, "My only request is that you spare my life and that of my people. For we have been sold to those who would destroy us."



The king was furious. "Who would do such a thing?" he asked. Esther pointed across the room, "This wicked Haman!"

"Haman even built a gallows for Mordecai," she said. "Then hang Haman on it!" the king ordered.





Then the king called Mordecai. "Even the king cannot reverse the law," he said, "but we can make another law.

Send a message to the Jews telling them whatever you want. Seal this new law with my ring."





The new law gave the Jews permission to get together and defend themselves. The king sent copies of the new law throughout the land.

When the day came for the two decrees to be put into effect, no one attacked the Jews. They were afraid of what might happen.



And Esther remembered Mordecai's words. Now she knew that God had used her to save his people.