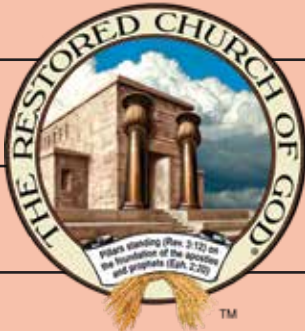


THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD®

# CHILDREN'S BIBLE LESSONS



Queen Esther



LEVEL 6  
LESSON 6

# Queen Esther

As we have learned, the nation of Judah was conquered by a great civilization and world-ruling empire—Babylon.

When studying the book of Daniel, we learned that the nation of Babylon was part of a prophesied series of world-ruling empires. Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. In his dream, these empires were pictured by a statue of a man. Babylon was the first empire, and greatest of those pictured, and was symbolized by the head of gold on the statue. The other parts of the statue symbolized additional empires that would appear later.

Do you remember what metal symbolized the second empire? \_\_\_\_\_

The second kingdom, the one that followed the Babylonian Empire, was the Medo-Persian Empire. Darius the Mede was the first ruler of this kingdom, which conquered Babylon. This was a fulfilled prophecy—one spoken of through Daniel. (You may wish to review the previous lesson to see what he said.)

Cyrus, king of Persia, led the empire while his uncle Darius was temporary ruler over Babylon. Later, Darius became ruler of this second world-ruling empire.

In this lesson, we will continue studying the Persian Empire. But this time, we will examine the life of a Jewish woman named Esther. As you might know, there is a book of the Bible named after her. There are many lessons to be learned from her experiences, which are detailed in the book of Esther.

## Queen Vashti Disobeys

Esther lived during the time when Ahasuerus ruled over Persia. The empire stretched from India to Ethiopia and included over 127 provinces. The king's palace was in the city of Shushan.

Three years into his reign, Ahasuerus held a feast for all his princes and servants. All the noblemen of his empire gathered for this special event! This feast was to last seven days and was the culmination of a six-month period during which he showed off all his wealth.

The feast was spectacular! It was held in the courtyard of the palace. Beautiful gardens surrounded the guests. There were linens and curtains of white, green and blue. Pillars of marble stood among the guests. They sat on couches with gold and silver threads, and drank out of gold goblets—each one was unique. Wine was in abundance.

At the same time, the queen of the land, Vashti, made a feast for the women. It was customary for the men and women to have separate public feasts.

In the midst of the celebrations, King Ahasuerus summoned his wife, Vashti, to come before him. He wanted to show his guests how truly beautiful she was—but she refused. This caused the king to become very upset, and anger burned hot within him.

The king asked his wise men and counselors what he should do with Vashti because she had

directly disobeyed the king's order. This action was unacceptable in those times. One man exclaimed, "Not only did she wrong you, O king, but all the princes of the land! If we do not do something, this will cause women throughout the empire to disobey their husbands. We must get rid of her!"

The king agreed, and Vashti was removed as queen. Ahasuerus also sent a decree throughout the land that all wives shall honor their husbands.

### **A New Queen**

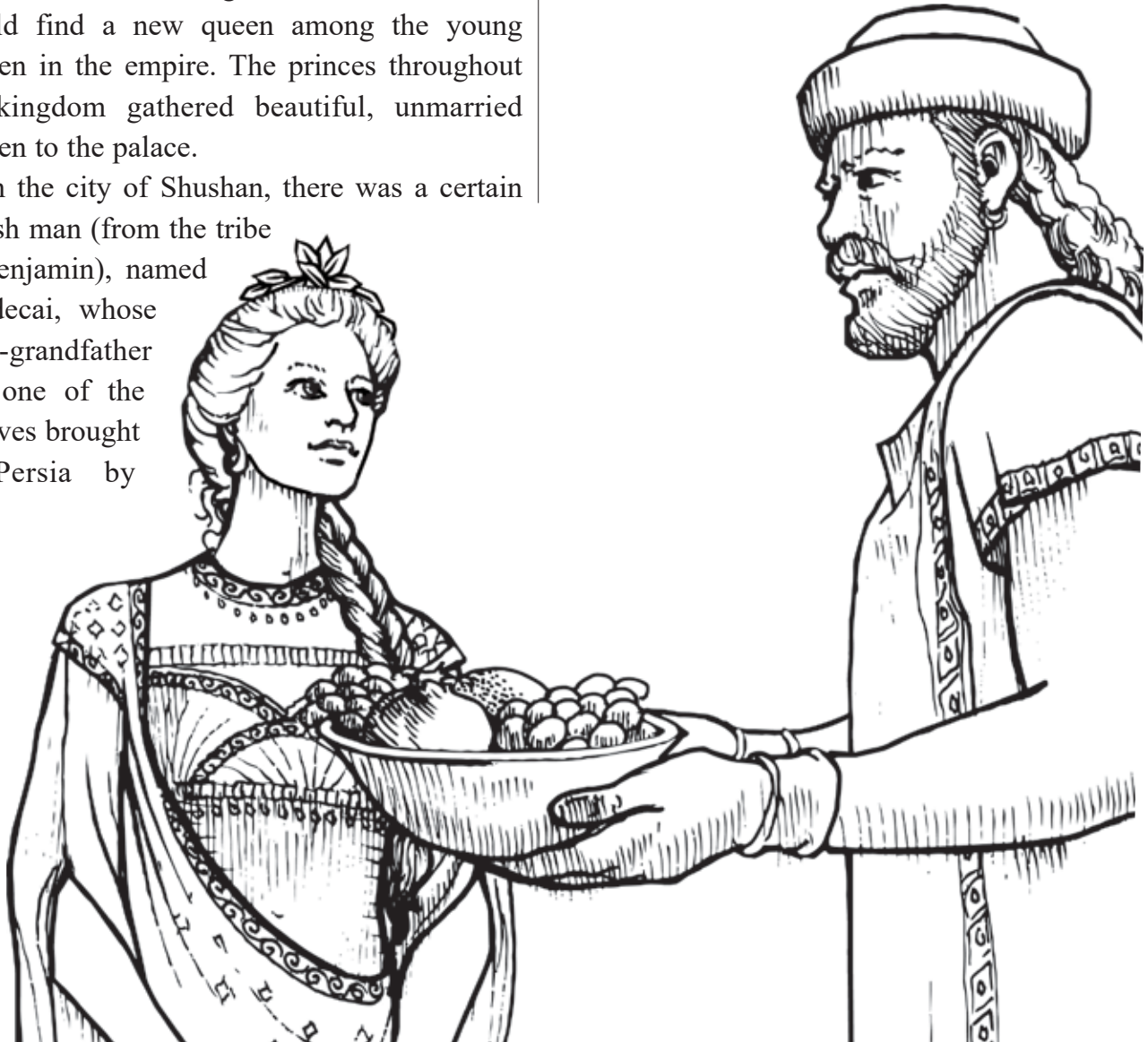
The advisors to the king told Ahasuerus that he should find a new queen among the young women in the empire. The princes throughout the kingdom gathered beautiful, unmarried women to the palace.

In the city of Shushan, there was a certain Jewish man (from the tribe of Benjamin), named Mordecai, whose great-grandfather was one of the captives brought to Persia by

King Nebuchadnezzar almost 100 years earlier. When Mordecai's uncle died, he became the guardian of a young and beautiful woman named Esther.

Esther was one of the women brought to the king's palace. But because she was also a Benjamite of the Jewish captivity, Mordecai told Esther to keep her family heritage a secret.

Esther was shown preferential treatment by the king's chief custodian of the women. She found favor in the eyes of the king, and she was given extras that the other women did not receive. After a year of preparation, the women



were to appear before the king. If the king showed a special interest in any woman, he would then request another visit.

During this time, Esther's cousin, Mordecai, walked in the courtyard of the palace. He watched events unfold each day and learned how things were developing.

The king showed a great interest in Esther and, over time, chose her to be his new queen. Esther also obtained great respect from the other people in the palace.

The king then made a feast to honor his new queen and proclaimed a new holiday called the "Feast of Esther."

Even after her marriage to the king, Esther did not tell anyone about her heritage. Mordecai had advised her not to do it, and she listened because she viewed him as a father.

One day, Mordecai overheard two of the king's servants plotting to kill the king. He relayed this information to Esther, who then told the king what Mordecai had discovered. An investigation took place; the information was found to be true; and the two servants were hung. Later, we will see that this event worked to the advantage of Mordecai and Esther.

As time passed, the king promoted a man by the name of Haman (an Agagite—an Edomite or Amalekite—who had strong hatred toward the Jewish people) to be in charge of all the princes of the land. This was a very high office, and Haman demanded all the servants to bow down in reverence. However, Mordecai refused to bow down to this man or to show him the respect that he deserved.

Turn to Romans 13:1-7 and I Peter 2:17 and write out the verses. This is directly speaking to how and why God expects us to honor those in authority over us.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Talk with your parents and write out at least four positions of authority in your life. Consider how important it is to God to obey those who have authority.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_

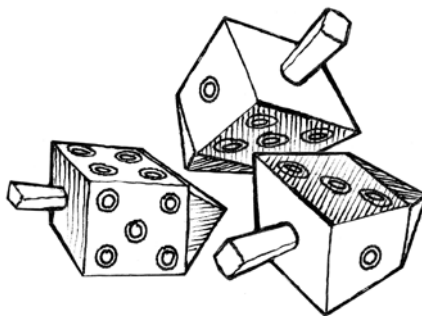
Some of the king’s servants noticed Mordecai’s refusal and spoke to Haman about it. The next time Haman walked by Mordecai, he watched him to see if the report was true. Mordecai, again, did not bow down to worship Haman. This action filled Haman with wrath. He inquired of the king’s servants about this man, and they told him that Mordecai was a Jew. Haman declared that he would get even with Mordecai and, at the same time, eliminate the entire Jewish community in the kingdom!

### An Attempt to Destroy the Jews

Haman moved quickly to make his plan a reality. He went before the king to ask him to issue a decree. However, he was very careful not to mention the nationality of the people. He said, “There are a certain people scattered throughout your kingdom whose laws differ from all the other people. They don’t even keep the king’s laws—your laws! You should *not* tolerate these people, O king! If it pleases you, let it be decreed that they should be killed, and I will put ten thousand talents of silver [about 19 million U.S. dollars] into your treasury” (Esther 3:8-9).

The king, not knowing who these people were, agreed. He issued a decree and gave Haman the authority to carry it out. He said, “Do whatever you think is best with these people.” The king’s decree was sent throughout the land.

The decree stated that all Jews were to be killed on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month—eleven months from the time of the actual decree. All Jews, including women and children, were to be killed.



It is worth noting that the Jews had almost a year to prepare for this day. The reason is that the timing of the implementation of decrees was done by casting lots. This is what happened here. They cast lots before Haman to determine which day the Jews would be destroyed. God allowed this to play out for an entire year.

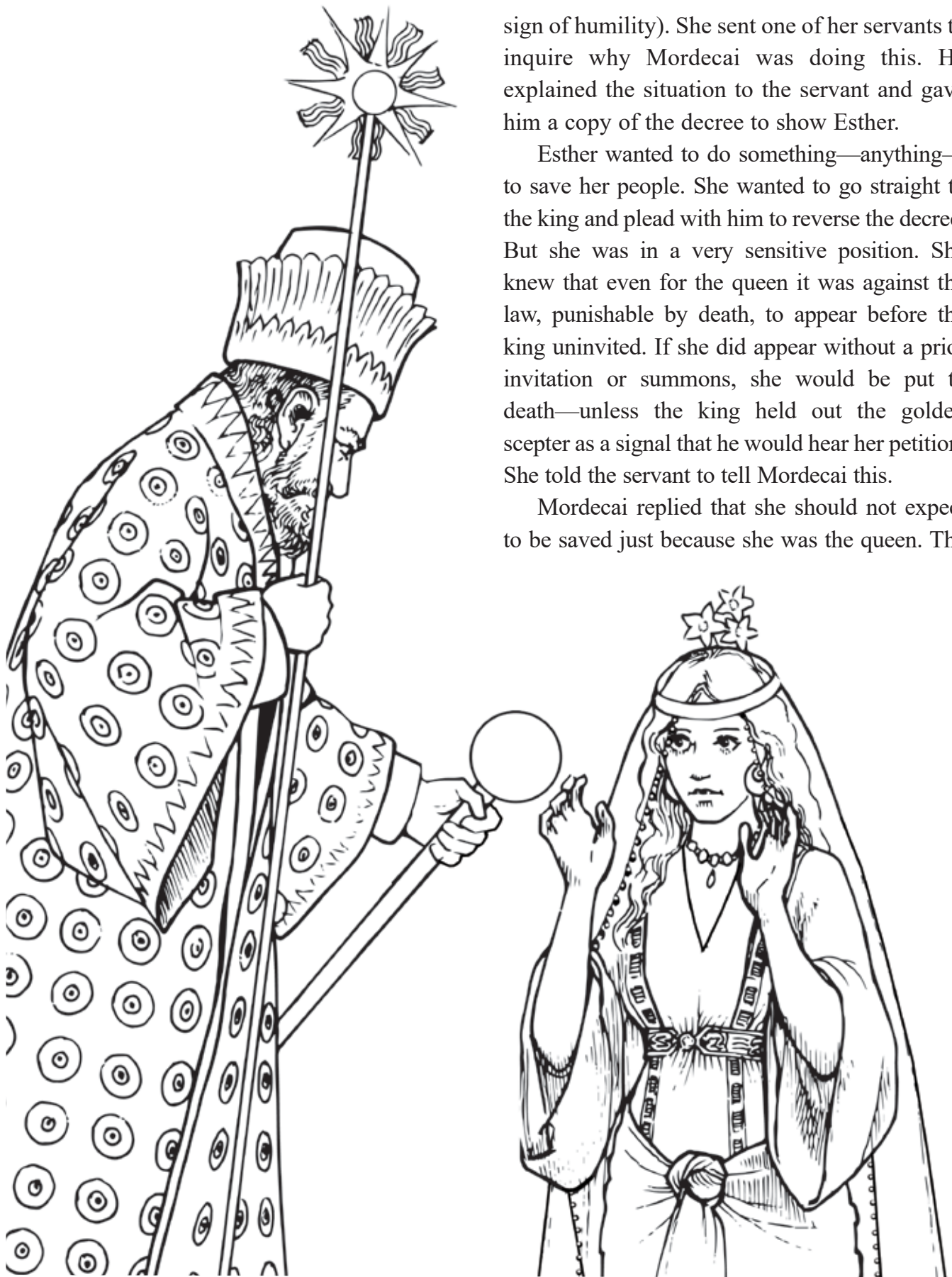
Haman planned a coordinated attack against the Jews to take place on the specified day throughout the entire kingdom. Every Jew—man, woman and child—was to be killed. There was great anguish among the Jewish people throughout the land, and they fasted for their own deliverance, but no where does it mention that they looked to God.

In contrast, we all fast today annually on the Day of Atonement. This is probably a day that you remember because we go without food and water. However, Christians fast on a regular basis. It causes them to resist wrong thoughts and actions and, in turn, helps them draw close to God. Turn to James 4:7-8, 10 and fill in the blanks:

“Therefore \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ and he will \_\_\_\_\_  
 from you. \_\_\_\_\_ to God and  
 He will draw near \_\_\_\_\_. Cleanse your  
 hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you  
 double-minded... \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves in  
 the sight of the Lord, and He will \_\_\_\_\_  
 you \_\_\_\_\_.”

### Three-Day Fast

Unaware of Haman’s plans, Esther’s maids came to her and told her that Mordecai was in the square in front of the king’s court in sackcloth and ashes (a



sign of humility). She sent one of her servants to inquire why Mordecai was doing this. He explained the situation to the servant and gave him a copy of the decree to show Esther.

Esther wanted to do something—anything—to save her people. She wanted to go straight to the king and plead with him to reverse the decree. But she was in a very sensitive position. She knew that even for the queen it was against the law, punishable by death, to appear before the king uninvited. If she did appear without a prior invitation or summons, she would be put to death—unless the king held out the golden scepter as a signal that he would hear her petition. She told the servant to tell Mordecai this.

Mordecai replied that she should not expect to be saved just because she was the queen. The

decree stated that *all* Jews would be killed. In other words, she needed to sacrifice her time and possibly her life in order to try to save her people.

Esther and Mordecai fasted to exact their own purpose.

Turn to Isaiah 58:4 and write out the scripture. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Esther knew that she had to put her life on the line for her people. She had one of her servants go to Mordecai and tell him that he and all the Jews in Shushan should fast for three days. She and her maidens would fast as well. Again, they exacted their own fast for their own purposes, never mentioning seeking God.

After the third day, Esther dressed in her royal robe and stood in the inner court of the king's palace until the king noticed her. She found favor in his eyes, and he held out the golden scepter. She was safe! Esther came forward and touched the top of the scepter.

The king said to her, "What will you, Queen Esther? And what is your request? It shall be even given you to the half of the kingdom." Esther replied, "If it seems good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him." So the king ordered Haman to come to the banquet with him (Esther 5:3-4).

While at the banquet, the king asked Esther what he could do for her, again offering her up to half of the kingdom. Her response was for the king and Haman to come again the following day to another banquet she was preparing. (Remember, Esther's family heritage had not yet been made known to the king or to Haman.)

When Haman left the banquet, he went home and called for all his friends and his wife. He told them about all his riches and that the king had bestowed on him promotion and glory. He bragged about how the queen had invited no one but himself and the king to a banquet and that he would be attending another one the next day. Haman thought that he was receiving great honor.

But one thing continued to eat at him—Mordecai! Haman could not even enjoy all this honor because he kept thinking of his enemy who would not bow down to him.

His family and friends encouraged him to get rid of Mordecai. "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet" (Esther 5:14). This pleased Haman very much, and he had the construction of the gallows start immediately.

### **Honor Comes to Mordecai**

That night, the king could not sleep. He called his servant to read the book of the records of the chronicles to him. During the reading, it was found written that Mordecai had previously warned the king of an assassination attempt. He remembered this and asked what reward Mordecai had received for warning the king. The servant replied that nothing had been done—that no reward had been issued.

The king then asked his servant, "Who is in the court?" It just so happened that Haman had come into the court to ask the king's permission to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had ordered built. But before Haman could ask, the king spoke first. "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delights to honor?" By this

time, Haman's head was swollen with pride. He thought to himself, "Whom would the king delight to do honor more than myself?" (Esther 6:4, 6).

Thinking the king was asking what honor he (Haman) would like, he responded, "Let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head. Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!'" (Esther 6:8-9).

The king thought this was a great idea. He then told Haman to do to Mordecai all that Haman had just suggested. What a shock to Haman! He had to do what the king commanded, to a man he despised—loathed. Now Haman had to lead a horse through the city streets with Mordecai sitting on it, and proclaiming out loud, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor" (Esther 6:11).

After all this, Haman and the king went to the second banquet that Esther had prepared. On the second day of this banquet, the king asked again, "What is your petition, Queen Esther?



And it shall be granted you: and what is your request? And it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom" (Esther 7:2).

### **Haman's Plot Exposed**

The queen finally gave her answer: "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request." Esther



then relayed the story of how her people had been singled out to be destroyed. The king was furious and demanded to know who was responsible for such a heinous act.

Fingers were pointed at Haman. The tides had turned! All the plotting that this wicked man had done was now coming to haunt him. One of the servants said to the king, "Behold also, the gallows...which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king." Then the king said, "Hang Haman!"

Haman was full of pride and was an evil-hearted man. Consider what the following Proverbs say about this and write them below.



**Proverbs 16:5, 18**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Proverbs 11:2**

---

---

---

---

**Proverbs 15:25**

---

---

---

---

---

The king learned that Mordecai was the cousin of his queen. He asked Mordecai to come before him, and he took off his ring, the one he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Mordecai was given a very high position in the king's government.

**The Jews Protect Themselves**

Esther then came before the king and pleaded that he reverse the law that he had implemented under Haman to kill the Jewish people.

However, all decrees issued by the king were irreversible. So, the king then issued a new decree stating that all Jewish people may defend *themselves* if attacked. Because of this new decree, the *Jewish people* fought off and overpowered those who attacked them and were saved from certain annihilation. They then, in effect, reversed the initial decree made by Haman. But the Jews took the decision to another level.

When the day of Haman's decree came, many people who were not Jewish helped those who were under attack. The Jews forced them to convert to Judaism. Many died unnecessarily at the hands of the Jews, even the sons of Haman.

All the Jews in Persia rejoiced. They had delivered themselves! They held a feast that is still celebrated by the Jewish people today. The celebration is called the Feast of Purim. Purim comes from the Hebrew word *pur*, which means lot. This name was chosen because Haman cast lots to determine when the Jews were to be killed.

Throughout this story God is not seen. But He allowed these things to happen for His over-

all purpose. What must have seemed like an impossible situation to Esther turned out to be the complete opposite.

The book of Esther is an example of a people who relied on themselves for deliverance. In the end, they accomplished this through their own clever schemes that went too far and hurt other people. They did not go to God for guidance. But God will eventually teach these people to rely on Him and will show them His way is always best.

### Proverbs 3:5-8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Isaiah 58:1-2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





**BIBLE MEMORY:** Proverbs 16:5,18  
 Psalm 71:5

### Mystery Advice

Haman became filled with pride and self-importance, which led to foolish decisions. Complete the sentences below. Then use the circled letters to discover the mystery advice.

Will you follow this advice?

1. \_ \_ ( ) ( ) \_ \_
2. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ( ) ( )
3. ( ) \_ \_ \_ \_
4. \_ \_ \_ ( ) \_ \_ \_ \_
5. ( ) \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ( )
6. \_ ( ) \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
7. \_ ( ) \_ \_ \_
8. \_ \_ ( ) ( )
9. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ( ) \_
10. \_ ( ) \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
11. \_ \_ ( ) \_ \_
12. \_ ( ) \_ \_ \_
13. \_ \_ \_ ( ) \_
14. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ( ) \_
15. \_ ( ) \_ \_ \_
16. \_ \_ \_ ( )
17. ( ) \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
18. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ( ) ( )

- The <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ community was to be killed in Persia.
- On the <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ month, the Jews were going to be attacked.
- <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ was a very evil man.
- Haman was going to pay the king ten <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ talents of silver.
- <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ overheard two of the king's servants <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ to <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ the king.
- The <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ of Shushan was the location of the king's <sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_.
- Mordecai was <sup>10</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ by the king, when <sup>11</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ had to <sup>12</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ him on a <sup>13</sup> \_\_\_\_\_.
- <sup>14</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ were made to hang Mordecai.
- The <sup>15</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ allowed the <sup>16</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ to protect themselves.
- Cyrus led the kingdom after <sup>17</sup> \_\_\_\_\_.
- The second <sup>18</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ that followed the Babylonian Empire was the Medo-Persian Empire.

The mystery advice is:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_