



## MAIN SCRIPTURES

- Esther 1-10
- 1 Samuel 15

## WILLING TO DIE FOR THE CAUSE

- For Such a Time as This

## FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

**“You must speak now on behalf of all the Jewish people. If you do not, they will receive help from another place. They will become safe and free, but you and your father’s family will die. I think that perhaps you have become queen so that you can help at a time like this. {16} ‘After three days, I will go and speak to the king. I know that this is against the king’s law. But if I must die, I agree to die.’”** Esther 4:14, 16 EASY

**“So the Jews call the days of their festival ‘Purim’. That was the name of the dice that Haman used. They did this because of what Mordecai wrote in his letter. They wanted to remember everything that had happened to them. They made a rule for all the Jews, their descendants, and for any other people who came to join them. The rule said that they must all have a holiday on those two days every year. They must do what Mordecai had written in his letter to them. {32} Queen Esther's command made these rules about the Festival of Purim. The palace secretaries wrote them down in a book.”** Esther 9:26-27, 32 EASY

## **INTRODUCTION: The Queen who was Willing to Die**

*The law of Moses describes how God's mighty act of deliverance is the meaning behind holidays such as Passover and Tabernacles. The book of Esther is another story of deliverance, this time during the Persian period 1000 years later. God is never mentioned by name, but His clear hand of protection can be detected in the timing and combination of events. Esther shows how God intervenes once again to save the Jews, leading to the commemoration of this great rescue in a new festival called Purim.*

*It's the story of a Jewish exile named Esther, who becomes a queen willing to die for her people. It highlights her cousin and guardian Mordecai, an uncompromising officer at the king's gate. They work together to rescue their people from a plot to destroy them, a diabolical plan hatched by Haman, the evil progeny of king Agag, whose family line survived when king Saul of Israel discarded God's command to utterly destroy the Amalakites some 520 years earlier. The events take place during the reign of the Persian king Xerxes I, 486-465 BC, better thought of as the understanding king.*

*The story has been told to every generation since, during what became the feast of Purim; it places you right in the middle of the action. You should not only join in celebrating God's deliverance, but you should ask yourself, as Mordecai asked Esther, for what great purpose has God brought you to this moment in your life?*

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

**1. A Story of Deliverance:** a Willing Queen; an Uncompromising Officer; an Evil Progeny; and an Understanding King

**A. Esther, Mordecai, Haman, and Xerxes**

(1) **Chapter 1:** Queen Vashti disobeys King Xerxes (Ahasuerus)

(a) The Great Feast

1. King Xerxes ruled over Persia and Media (and 127 regions from India to Ethiopia).
2. He lived in the capital city of Susa.
3. During his third year of rule he gave a massive feast (for 180 days) for all rulers and leaders throughout his kingdom; and for his officers and soldiers.
4. King Xerxes wanted to show everyone that he was a great king (rich and powerful).

(b) When that feast ended, Xerxes gave another 7 day feast for everyone who lived in Susa.

1. For important and ordinary people.
2. It took place in the garden of the king's palace.
3. The gardens were lavishly arrayed with expensive materials, precious metals, and valuable stones.
4. The people drank unlimited amounts of the king's wine from valuable golden cups.

5. Simultaneously, Queen Vashti (Xerxes' wife) gave her own feast for all the women in the palace. **(This will soon prove to be problematic!)**
- (c) On day 7 of the feast, Xerxes was feeling 'wine happy!'
1. He sent 7 eunuchs who served him in the palace to bring Queen Vashti to him.
    - a) He requested she wear her royal crown.
    - b) He wanted to show everyone his beautiful queen.
    - c) Queen Vashti was informed of the king's demand, **but she refused**. This made Xerxes very angry.
- (d) The king sought counsel about her rebellion from **wise advisors** (his most important officers in the kingdom).
1. When something like this happened, the king would seek counsel about the laws and customs of Persia.
  2. *"What should we do with Queen Vashti? What does our law say about a queen who disobeys her king?"*
- (e) One advisor (Memukan) replied...
1. Queen Vashti has not only violated the king; she's also wronged your subjects throughout the kingdom.
  2. Other women will hear *"Queen Vashti did not obey her husband, King Xerxes. When he demanded she come to him, she refused!"* and use it as an excuse to disobey their own husbands.

3. Everywhere in Persia and Media, the wives of the king's officers will know what she has done.
  4. They will, in turn, refuse to obey and respect their husbands, and the men will become very angry.
- (f) Suggestion... **Replace Queen Vashti!**
1. Give a royal command. Make it the law of Persia and Media that no one can change.
    - a) Vashti must never see you again.
    - b) Find another woman who deserves to be queen.
    - c) Notify the entire kingdom about the new law, then all women will respect and obey their husbands.
- (g) The king and his officers liked this idea.
1. The king did as Memukan advised.
  2. He sent letters to all the regions of his kingdom (in the language of each region), so that all the people could read and understand the law.
  3. The law said that every man should be the ruler of his family and he should speak in his native tongue.
- (2) **Chapter 2:** King Xerxes chooses Esther as his new queen
- (a) Some time later, after King Xerxes' anger had subsided...
1. He pondered over what Vashti had done and recalled the law, and how she should no longer be the queen.

2. His palace servants suggested, *“The king should send officers from every region of his kingdom to look for beautiful young women. The king may choose the woman that pleases him most to replace Vashti.”*
    - a) Bring all the beautiful women here to Susa.
    - b) Hegai, the eunuch in charge of the royal harem, will pamper them to make them more beautiful.
    - c) King Xerxes liked this idea.
- (b) Meanwhile, a Jew named Mordecai (a descendant of Benjamin) lived in Susa.
1. Mordecai’s great grandfather Kish was a prisoner from Jerusalem under king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.
  2. Mordecai was guardian of his young cousin Hadassah, whose parents had died.
    - a) He took care of her, as if his own daughter.
    - b) She was also called Esther (to obscure her Jewish heritage). Esther was very beautiful.
  3. Esther became one of the young women the king’s officers gathered to Susa to live in the royal harem.
  4. Hegai favored Esther and he was kind to her.
    - a) He gave her special food and oils to make her more beautiful.

- b) He chose seven female servants from the king's palace to pamper her.
  - c) He moved Esther and her servants to the best rooms in the harem.
5. Esther did not tell anyone that she was a Jew (as Mordecai advised).
  6. Mordecai checked on Esther daily. (He walked in the palace yard near the harem).
- (c) The young women stayed in the harem for 12 months.
1. 6 months of myrrh oil treatment for their bodies and an additional 6 months of other perfumes and oils.
  2. Then they could each go to the king's bedroom.
    - a) She could take whatever she wanted with her from the harem to the king's bedroom.
    - b) She would go to be with the king in the evening and stay with him during that night.
    - c) In the morning, she waited in a different part of the harem where the king's **slave wives** lived.
    - d) They remained there and only saw the king again if he was pleased with her and if he asked for her by name.
- (d) Then it was Esther's turn!
1. Everyone who saw Esther liked her.

2. When she went to the king, she took with her only the things that Hegai had suggested.
    - a) **Esther went to King Xerxes in his royal rooms in the palace** in the 10th month of the year, after King Xerxes had ruled for 7 years.
    - b) The king was more in love and was more pleased with Esther than any other women.
  3. He chose her as queen and gave her the royal crown.
    - a) To honor Esther, the king gave a great feast for all the leaders and officers of his kingdom.
    - b) He declared it a holiday for everyone in his kingdom, and he gave away expensive gifts.
- (e) Mordecai saves the king from an evil plot to kill him!
1. Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, as an officer.
  2. Esther continued to obey Mordecai, as she had when she lived with him as his daughter. She still hid that she was a Jew (as Mordecai advised).
  3. One day, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate when he heard two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthana and Teresh, plotting to kill King Xerxes.
    - a) Mordecai informed Queen Esther and she told the king, who then investigated and found it was true.

- b) He sentenced the eunuchs to death and hanged them from a wooden tower.
  - c) The account was recorded in the king's history log.
- (3) **Chapter 3:** Mordecai refuses to give honor to Haman
- (a) **An Evil Progeny:** after some time, King Xerxes gave Haman (one of his officers) greater authority.
    1. Haman became Xerxes' most important officer.
    2. He was a son of Hammedatha, **a descendant of Agag.**
      - a) Agag was the king of the Amalakites, the one spared by king Saul in defiance of Yahweh's command (through the prophet Samuel) to utterly destroy the Amalakites (1 Samuel 15).
      - b) In his rebellion, Saul handled the situation in a way that pleased himself and not God, and some of the Amalakites survived.
      - c) Haman is the offspring of Saul's refusal to obey Yahweh 520 years earlier. (See: [Object Lesson: Virtue & Surrender Entitlements and Practice Gratitude](#) for in-depth teachings 1 Sam.15)
    3. **An Uncompromising Officer:** The king commanded that all the royal officers at the king's gate must bend down to Haman.
      - a) They all gave Haman honor and bowed to him.

- b) **Mordecai would not bow to nor honor Haman.**
- c) Other officers asked Mordecai why he would not obey the king's command (they warned him daily).
- d) Mordecai would never agree to bow to Haman.
- e) The officers told Haman that Mordecai admitted he was a Jew.
- f) They were curious to know if Haman would overlook Mordecai's behavior.

(b) Haman decides to kill all the Jews

1. Haman became incensed over Mordecai's refusal to honor him.
  - a) He wouldn't be satisfied by killing only Mordecai.
  - b) He wanted to destroy every Jew in Xerxes' kingdom (revenge for his Amalakite ancestors).
  - c) Haman asked his advisors when would be a good time to make this happen.
  - d) They threw dice (aka: Purim) to decide the right time to destroy the Jews.
  - e) The dice chose the 12th month of the year (Adar).
2. Haman projected his rage over Mordecai's offense on all Jews.

- a) He fabricated a rumor for King Xerxes: *“There are people living throughout your kingdom with different customs who refuse to obey your laws.”*
3. Haman’s advice to the King...
- a) It is not good to let them live among the other people in your kingdom.
  - b) We should send out a command to destroy them.
  - c) Haman offered to pay the king the expenses for the officers to kill the Jews (350 tons of silver).
  - d) The king gave the signet ring from his own finger to Haman, passing on his authority to kill the Jews.
  - e) He tells Haman, *“Keep your money; do anything you want with these people.”*
4. Haman asked the king’s secretaries to write down the king’s commands in letters to send to the king’s rulers and officers in every region.
- a) They wrote in the language of each region.
  - b) Haman used the authority of King Xerxes and marked the letters with the king’s signet ring.
  - c) Men delivered the letters to all the regions of the kingdom (to be read aloud).
  - d) Haman’s command said that on the 13th day of the 12th month (Adar) they should kill every Jew.

- e) They would be permitted to take all the Jews' valuables for themselves.
- f) King Xerxes told his men to take the letters quickly to all the people. Everyone would know the law, and everyone would be ready on the right day.
- g) They also read the law to the people in Susa.
- h) Haman and the king then sat to drink together.

(4) **Chapter 4:** Mordecai asks Queen Esther to help the Jews

- (a) Mordecai discovered what Haman had done.
  - 1. He tore his clothes, dressed in sackcloth, covered himself in ashes, and cried out in the city.
    - a) No one wearing sackcloth was permitted in the palace yard, so Mordecai stayed at the king's gate.
    - b) The Jews throughout the kingdom heard of the king's command; there was weeping and fasting. Many of them also lay on sackcloth and ashes.
    - c) Esther heard what Mordecai was doing.
    - d) She was upset and sent clothes for him to wear instead of the sackcloth, but Mordecai refused.
    - e) Esther asked Hathach, a eunuch who served her, to discover what was wrong with Mordecai.

- f) Mordecai told Hathach everything, even the amount of the expenses Haman offered to pay the king for the people to destroy all the Jews.
  - g) Mordecai gave Hathach a copy of the law to show to Esther and asked him to explain it to her.
  - h) **Mordecai also demanded that Esther speak to the king about letting her people live.**
  - i) Hathach returned to the palace and told Esther what Mordecai said.
2. Esther sent Hathach to Mordecai with this response:
- a) Everyone knows the law; no one can just appear before the king when he is in his official area of the palace, unless he is first invited.
  - b) If anyone appears uninvited, that person must die.
  - c) He will only survive if the king extends his gold scepter towards him.
  - d) The king has not invited me to see him in 30 days.
3. **Mordecai sent Esther this response:**
- a) Don't think that you will be safe because you live in the king's palace.
  - b) You will not escape when they start killing Jews.
  - c) *"You must speak now on behalf of all Jews. If you don't, **they'll get help somewhere else** to stay safe"*

*and free. But you and your father's house will come to an end. **I think perhaps you have become queen to help at a time like this.***" (Esther 4:14)

4. **A Willing Queen:** Esther sent her answer to Mordecai at the king's gate.

- a) Ask all the Jews in Susa to meet.
- b) Ask them to fast and pray for her for three days.
- c) After three days, she will go speak to the king.
- d) She will do this against the king's law.
- e) ***"But if I must die because of this, I agree to die."***  
(Esther 4:16)
- f) Mordecai left and did everything Esther asked.

(5) **Chapter 5:** Esther prepares a meal for Xerxes and Haman

- (a) After the fast, Esther put on her royal clothes.
  1. She went to King Xerxes' official area of the palace.
    - a) She stood in the yard outside his rooms.
    - b) The king was sitting on his royal throne.
    - c) He could see Esther through the door.
    - d) **He was pleased to see her; he held out his scepter.**
    - e) Esther came to him and touched the scepter.
  2. The king asked Esther what was bothering her.
    - a) He promised do whatever she wished, even if she requested half his kingdom!

- b) Esther requested that the king would attend a private banquet with her and to bring Haman.
  - c) The king sent for Haman so they could attend.
- (b) At the banquet...
1. While drinking wine, the king again asked Esther what she wished of him.
    - a) Again he reiterated that he would give her whatever she wanted.
    - b) *“Just tell me what you want me to do. Even if you want half of my kingdom, I will give it to you.”*
  2. Esther panics; instead of revealing what she truly desires...
    - a) Her simple request is that he attend another private banquet with Haman the next day, if he finds her pleasing.
    - b) Then she will reveal the true nature of her request.
- (c) **An Uncompromising Officer:** [between the banquets]  
Haman has a meltdown over Mordecai’s unwillingness to honor him.
1. Haman left Queen Esther’s banquet feeling happy...
    - a) But, on his way out he saw Mordecai at the king’s gate, and Mordecai **again showed him no respect;** Mordecai refused to kneel before him.

- b) Haman's happiness turned to rage.
- 2. When he arrived home he called his friends and wife Zeresh to meet with him.
  - a) Haman proceeded to brag about his riches; his number of sons; the many things the king had done to honor him; and how he was the most important of all the king's rulers and officers.
  - b) **Ironically:** Haman boasted that he was the sole officer invited by Queen Esther to a special meal with the king and how he had another exclusive invite the next day.
  - c) Irregardless, **even all these things could not sustain his pleasure** because of this one Jewish man Mordecai, who would not bow to him.
- 3. Haman's wife and friends advise him about how to solve his dilemma with Mordecai.
  - a) Have your men build a wooden tower 22 meters high and ask the king to hang Mordecai on it.
  - b) Then you can enjoy your next meal with the King and Queen.
  - c) Haman liked the idea very much; so he instructed his men to build the tower.

(6) **Chapter 6:** King Xerxes honors Mordecai.

- (a) That same night the king was restless.
  - 1. He asked a servant to bring the kingdom's history log and to read some entries.
    - a) The log included a report about the two eunuchs who plotted to kill the king.
    - b) Of course, the report named Mordecai as the officer who uncovered the plot and saved his life.
    - c) The king was curious if he had ever honored Mordecai for saving his life.
    - d) He discovered he had done nothing.
  - 2. Haman arrived at the palace at that exact time to ask the king to hang Mordecai on his new wooden tower.
    - a) **More Irony:** Before Haman could bring up his request, Xerxes invites Haman in to solicit his advice about what would be an appropriate way to celebrate a man deserving of honor in his kingdom.
    - b) Haman arrogantly believes the king is referring to him, so he guides the king in a way that aligns with his own prideful desire to be honored.
  - 3. Haman recommendations for what the king should do to honor a man he wishes to celebrate. **He should:**
    - a) Wear royal clothes previously worn by the king.

- b) Ride a horse previously ridden by the king; the horse should wear a special crown that proves it belonged to the king.
  - c) Give the clothes and the horse to a royal officer who will dress the man, place him on the horse, and then lead him through the streets of the city.
  - d) As he goes, the officer must shout, *“This is what the king does for a man who he wants to honor!”*
4. The king tells Haman it’s a great idea; go quickly!
- a) Do everything that you have suggested.
  - b) **And do it all for the Jew named Mordecai.**
  - c) Be careful to do for him **each thing you suggested.**
  - d) So, Haman was obligated to do for Mordecai all according to what the king commanded.
  - e) He was forced to honor Mordecai as he wished to be honored himself.
  - f) In his humiliation, Haman was forced to lead Mordecai through streets and shout, *“Look! This is what the king does for a man for whom he wants to give honor!”*
  - g) Afterwards, Mordecai returned to the king’s gate.
5. Haman hurried home after his humiliation...
- a) He hid his face in shame and was distressed.

- b) He told his wife and advisors everything.
- c) They warn that it seemed he'd already lost some power to Mordecai! *"If he really is a Jew, you will never defeat him. He will destroy you completely."*
- d) While speaking, the king's eunuchs arrived to quickly take Haman to the next special banquet with Esther and Xerxes.
  - 1) Haman is about to discover that his wife and advisors were correct!

(7) **Chapter 7:** King Xerxes issues Haman's death sentence.

- (a) Xerxes and Haman attend Queen Esther's 2nd banquet.
  - 1. While drinking wine, the king said to Esther, *"Queen Esther, tell me what you want me to do for you? Even if you want half of my kingdom, I will give it to you."*  
Queen Esther replied...
    - a) I hope that you are pleased with me.
    - b) Please save my life and the lives of my people.
    - c) A declaration was issued designating us as animals.
    - d) We are slated for genocide; all of my people will be executed.
    - e) If this, for example, was a matter of simply being designated as slaves, as horrible as that would be,

it would still not have been serious enough to interrupt your majesty.

2. King Xerxes asked Queen Esther...
  - a) Who did that? Who would even think of such a thing? Where is he?
3. Haman's whole world is about to turn upside down!
  - a) Esther replied, "*The enemy of our people is this wicked man Haman!*" (Esther 7:6)
  - b) Fear enveloped Haman, as he sat in the presence of the king and queen.
  - c) The king was so enraged, he stormed out into the palace garden.
  - d) Haman was certain that the king would have him executed, so in another moment of **great irony, he begged Queen Esther to save his life.**
  - e) She was there lying on the bed and Haman threw himself down beside her (a really bad look!).
4. At that very moment, the king returned to see Haman lying on the bed next to his wife!
  - a) He screamed, "*What is this man doing? He even dishonors the queen in my own palace!*"
  - b) The king's servants quickly covered Haman's head.

- c) One servant informed the king that there was a very high wooden tower near Haman's home.
- d) It just keeps getting worse for Haman... The king was then told that **Haman built the tower to hang Mordecai**—the very man who saved the king's life.
- e) The king ordered that Haman be hanged from that tower until he is dead.
- f) So, they hanged Haman from the tower intended for Mordecai—**such irony!**
- g) After that, the king was not so angry.

(8) **Chapter 8:** King Xerxes makes a law to protect the Jews

- (a) **An Understanding King:** That same day King Xerxes gave everything that belonged to Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther.

1. **Transfer of Authority:** Esther revealed that Mordecai was her cousin and Mordecai came to meet the king.

- a) The king had taken back his signet ring from Haman and placed it on his own finger.
- b) **Now, he takes it off and he gives it to Mordecai.**
- c) And Esther gave Mordecai authority over everything that belonged to Haman.

2. Esther again went in to speak to the king.

- a) She wanted him to reverse Haman's evil ruling to kill all the Jews.
  - b) She threw herself down at his feet and wept.
  - c) The king held out his gold scepter towards Esther.
  - d) Haman had already sent letters to all the regions of the kingdom, an order to execute every Jew.
  - e) Esther stood up to speak to the king. *"I have to do something to stop it."*
  - f) She requested the king prevent the execution of her relatives by issuing another law to reverse the command of Haman, **the descendant of Agag.**
3. King Xerxes replied to Queen Esther and he included Mordecai
- a) You are right! I have already executed Haman for his scheme to destroy the Jews.
  - b) I already gave his entire estate to Esther.
  - c) Now, **you** use my authority to decree another law.
  - d) Write a law that you think will save your people.
  - e) Then mark the letters with my signet ring.
  - f) Any letter that has my name and the mark of my ring on it has the king's authority.
  - g) No one can change it but the king.

4. The king's secretaries are called in to transcribe the new law on the 23rd day of the third month (Sivan).
  - a) Mordecai is the one who told them what to write.
  - b) The letters were sent to the Jews in their own language, and to the rulers and officers in all the 127 regions of the kingdom in the languages the people. (So, everyone would know the new law.)
  - c) Mordecai used King Xerxes' authority to write the letters and sealed it with the king's signet ring.
  - d) Conscripts dispersed on the king's fastest horses to bring the letters everywhere in the kingdom.
5. This is what the king's new law said:
  - a) All Jewish people could fight against any attackers.
  - b) They could join together to keep themselves safe.
  - c) The Jews could utterly destroy their enemies and take possession of all their valuables.
    - 1) **More Irony:** Yahweh's command to Saul; "*Now go and strike Amalek, and **utterly destroy all that they have**, and don't spare them;*"  
1 Samuel 15:3 WEBUS
  - d) The law said that the Jews could do this on the very day Haman's law dictated all Jews would be executed, the 13th day of the 12th month (Adar).

- e) The king told his officers to ride quickly on royal horses to deliver a copy of the law to every region, so everyone would know the new law and every Jew would be prepared to punish their enemies.
  - f) His officers also read the law aloud in Susa city.
6. Mordecai left the king's palace.
- a) He was wearing royal clothes and a gold crown.
  - b) The people in Susa city shouted with joy because of the new law.
  - c) Throughout the kingdom, Jews became respected, honored, and feared (reverenced).
  - d) **Because of their status, many people began to identify as Jews.**

(9) **Chapter 9:** The Jews punish their enemies

- (a) The 13th day of the 12th month (Adar) was the day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to attack them.
1. But now the king's new law said that the Jews could defend themselves.
- a) Throughout the kingdom the Jews joined together and defeated their enemies.
  - b) They punished anyone who tried to hurt them.
  - c) No one was able to fight effectively against them because everyone was afraid of them.

- d) Even the the king's officers, rulers, and leaders of each region decided to help the Jews.
  - e) They helped because they were afraid of Mordecai's power.
    - 1) He was now a very important officer in the king's palace.
    - 2) News about him reached all the regions as he became more and more powerful.
  - f) When the day arrived, the Jews could do what they wanted against their enemies.
  - g) They used their swords to attack and to kill them.
2. In Susa city, the Jews killed 500 men.
- a) They killed the ten sons of Haman.
  - b) The Jews did not take any of their belongings.
  - c) The king heard how many people they had killed in Susa city (500 men including Haman's 10 sons).
3. The king said to Queen Esther...
- a) He believes they have also killed many more enemies in the other regions of my kingdom!
  - b) *"What else do you want? I will do anything that you still want me to do."*
4. Esther replied...
- a) Please extend the law an additional day in Susa.

- b) Also, let them hang the dead bodies of Haman's ten sons from the wooden tower.
- c) The king agreed to her request!
- d) On the next day (the 14th) in Susa they killed 300 more. (They still did not take their belongings.)
- e) In the other regions on the 13th, they killed 75,000 enemies. (They did not take their belongings.)
- f) On the 14th, Jews in all regions rested and feasted.
- g) The Jews in Susa did not rest until the 15th when they ate feasts.
- h) That is why the Jews have a holiday on the 14th day of Adar.

(b) Summary: The Festival of Purim

1. Mordecai wrote down all these events.
  - a) He sent letters to all the Jews who were living in all the regions where King Xerxes ruled.
  - b) He told them that they should have a holiday on the 14th and 15th days of Adar every year.
  - c) They should do that to remember the time when they became safe from their enemies.
  - d) They should eat a feast, send gifts of food to each other to show their joy, and give gifts to the poor.
  - e) The Jews agreed to do everything Mordecai asked.

2. They also remembered what **Haman, the descendant of Agag**, had done.
  - a) He had been the enemy of the Jews and he had tried to destroy them.
  - b) He had thrown dice, called Purim, to choose the day when he would attack them and kill them.
  - c) But, Esther went to the king to expose Haman.
  - d) The the king stopped Haman's plot.
  - e) The king wrote a command to execute Haman, the very thing that Haman wanted to do to the Jews.
  - f) The bodies of Haman and his sons were hung on the tower that Haman built to execute Mordecai.
3. The Jews call the days of their feast 'Purim'.
  - a) That was the name of the dice that Haman used.
  - b) They did this because of what Mordecai wrote.
  - c) They wanted to remember all that had happened.
4. They made rules for all the Jews, their descendants, and any people who came to join them...
  - a) Celebrate a yearly holiday on those two days.
  - b) Do everything Mordecai wrote in his letter.
  - c) From that time, every Jewish family and their children must remember to keep the days of Purim as a holiday.

d) They must do it wherever they live. And their descendants must continue to do it every year, to remember what happened.

5. Queen Esther and Mordecai wrote another letter.

a) Esther used her authority to affirm that what Mordecai wrote about the feast of Purim was true.

b) They sent letters to all the Jews throughout the 127 regions of Xerxes' kingdom.

c) The message was to help them live safely in peace.

d) It told the Jews how to have the days of Purim as a holiday at the right time each year.

e) This rule about Purim had the authority of both Queen Esther and Mordecai.

f) The Jews were also instructed to remember the sad times and to fast.

g) Queen Esther's command affirmed all the rules and the palace secretaries recorded them in a book.

(10) **Chapter 10:** King Xerxes gives great authority to Mordecai

(a) *"Everything that King Xerxes did was written down in 'The history book of the kings of Media and Persia'.*

1. *"The book tells about all the great things that King Xerxes did with his power and authority. It also tells how the king **gave more authority to Mordecai**, who*

became very great. **The Jewish man, Mordecai, was the most important Jew in the whole kingdom. Only King Xerxes himself had more authority than Mordecai.** The other Jews respected Mordecai because he worked hard to help them. **He made sure that all his people could live safely.**" (Esther 10:1-3)

(b) For Such a Time as This!

1. **Mordecai and Esther:** If you don't someone else will!

Are you willing to die for the cause?

a) "For if you remain silent now, **then relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place**, but you and your father's house will perish. Who knows if you haven't come to the kingdom **for such a time as this?**" Esther 4:14 WEBUS

b) "Go, gather together all the Jews who are present in Susa, and fast for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I and my maidens will also fast the same way. Then I will go in to the king, which is against the law; and **if I perish, I perish.**" Esther 4:16 WEBUS

2. **Joseph and his Brothers:** It was God who sent me...

a) "Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." They came near. He said, "I am Joseph,

*your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Now don't be grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that you sold me here, for **God sent me before you to preserve life.** For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are yet five years, in which there will be no plowing and no harvest. **God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance.** So now it wasn't you who sent me here, but God, and he has made me a father to Pharaoh, Lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt." Genesis 45:4-8 WEBUS*

b) *"As for you, you meant evil against me, but **God meant it for good, to save many people alive, as is happening today.**" Genesis 50:20 WEBUS*

3. **God and You:** You should be asking yourself, for what great purpose has God brought you here to this very moment in your life? *"For such a time as this; it is God who sends you; and that is always good..."*

a) *"We know that **all things work together for good** for those who love God, for those who are **called according to his purpose.**" Romans 8:28 WEBUS*

THE END

## QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

- 1. Read the entire Book of Esther**
- 2. What did Queen Vashti do to make the King Xerxes extremely disappointed?**
  - A. What did his wise advisors instruct him to do in response?
  - B. What was their main concern?
  - C. How did this ultimately impact the life of Esther?
- 3. How did Mordecai save the king's life?**
  - A. Why is it significant that the entire account was recorded in the king's history log?
- 4. Describe the relationship between Mordecai and Haman?**
  - A. What does Haman plot to do because of Mordecai (to Mordecai specifically, and to all Jews)?
  - B. How does that relate to king Saul's rebellion 520 years earlier, as recorded in 1 Samuel 15?
  - C. What rumor does Haman tell King Xerxes and what does he advise the king to do about it?
- 5. What did Mordecai ask Esther to do in order to intervene in Haman's evil plot?**
  - A. What was her initial response?
  - B. What was her eventual response?
  - C. Describe all the events and actions Esther took to prevent Haman's evil plot from coming to fruition.

**6. Throughout the narrative there are many ironic key events...**

- A. Identify and describe each one. (Note: each irony has Haman at the central figure in the narrative!)

**7. What does the king do to counteract Haman's plot?**

- A. What advice does Esther give him?  
B. What role does Mordecai's play?  
C. What is the final decree about Purim?

**8. Write a summation essay about all the events that are remembered during the Feast of Purim.**

- A. Center your essay on these four ideas:

- 1) A Willing Queen
- 2) An Uncompromising Officer
- 3) An Evil Progeny
- 4) An Understanding King

**9. Now make it personal...**

- A. Review the legacies of Esther (Esther 4:14, 16) and Joseph (Genesis 45:4-8; 50:20) and then use Romans 8:28 to write your own. Are you willing to die for the cause?
- 1) Ask yourself, for what great purpose has God brought you here to this very moment in your life?
  - 2) Write a short essay describing what you hope would be remembered about you when your eulogy is being delivered.