

Esther

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God, through Esther, saved Israel from destruction so that the promised Messiah could come from Judah.



The Story

Once there was a king of Persia named Xerxes. He had a great feast where he invited many important people in his kingdom. The feast lasted many, many days. Near the end of the feasting King Xerxes ordered his queen, Vashti, to come to the feast in order to show off her beauty. Queen Vashti refused to come before the king. Because she did not obey the king she was no longer the queen.

All the young beautiful women of the land were brought before the king so that he could choose another queen. He loved Esther above all the other young women and she became the new queen.

Esther was a Jew, one of God's people. She was raised by her cousin, Mordecai, because her parents had died. Mordecai worked in the king's palace.

One day Mordecai overheard two gatekeepers planning to assassinate or kill the king. He told Esther who told the king of this evil plan. The two gatekeepers were killed and the story of Mordecai's help was written in the history book of King Xerxes.

Later a wicked man named Haman became a leader in the king's palace. He made an order that everyone should bow down to him because he thought he was so important. Mordecai would not bow down because God does not want us to worship anyone but Him. Because Mordecai would not bow down, Haman was very angry. He planned how he could kill Mordecai and all Mordecai's people, the Jews.

Haman came up with a plan. He told King Xerxes that there was a group of people in the kingdom who had their own laws. These people should be killed. King Xerxes let Haman make an order to destroy these people, the Jews, in one year.

When Esther, Mordecai and all the

Jews heard about this order they were very sad. Mordecai told Esther that she should go before the king and ask that the Jews be spared.

Esther knew that she could be killed if she went to the king without being invited. She asked Mordecai and all the Jews to pray for her so that she would not be killed when she went before the king uninvited. She said, "If I perish, I perish."

The next day she went to the king. He held out his golden scepter to her to show that she found favor in his eyes.

He said, "What do you want, Queen Esther. I will give you up to half of my kingdom."

"You and Haman come to a feast," she told King Xerxes.

Haman felt great pride that he and the king were asked to Esther's feast. At that feast she asked them to come again the next day and then she would make her request.

When Haman then saw Mordecai at the palace he was reminded of how he didn't bow down to him. Again Haman was very angry. Haman had gallows built so that one day he could have Mordecai hung on them.

That night the king could not sleep. He had his servants read from his history book. He was told of how Mordecai had saved his life when the two gatekeepers had planned to kill him.

"What did we do to honor Mordecai?" the king asked.

"Nothing," said the servants.

Later King Xerxes asked Haman what should be done to honor someone the king favored. Haman thought the king wanted to honor him so he told the king to have royal robes and a royal horse be given to the person the king honored. Then he should have the person taken through the

city and have the people pay their respect to him.

"Hurry, go take robes and a horse to Mordecai and take him through the city so that everyone can honor him," said the king.

Haman had to do this since he was ordered by the king.

Later Haman and the king again went to see Queen Esther's feast. Esther told the king about the man who had ordered the death of her and her people the Jews.

"Who is that man?" asked King Xerxes.

"It is Haman, " said Queen Esther.

Haman was ordered to be hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai. Mordecai was then given Haman's job in the palace.

When the time of Haman's order came, the Jews were not killed but were allowed to defend themselves and kill their enemies. A special celebration was started called Purim to honor the time that God spared the Jews from death.

Activity One - Draw a line to match the names to the sentence about them.

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|----|---|-------------|
| 1. | I am the King of Persia... | ...Mordecai |
| 2. | I am the Queen of Persia... | ...Haman |
| 3. | I am a wicked man who hated Jews... | ...Jesus |
| 4. | I am a Jew who worked in the king's palace... | ...Xerxes |
| 5. | I will save the Jews... | ...God |
| 6. | I will die for all people... | ...Esther |

Activity Two - Find the names from the story in the WORD SEARCH below.

XERXES	MORDECAI	SCEPTER	BOW DOWN	GALLOWS
ESTHER	HAMAN	PERISH	FEAST	KILL
	PERSIA	VASHTI	ASSASSINATE	

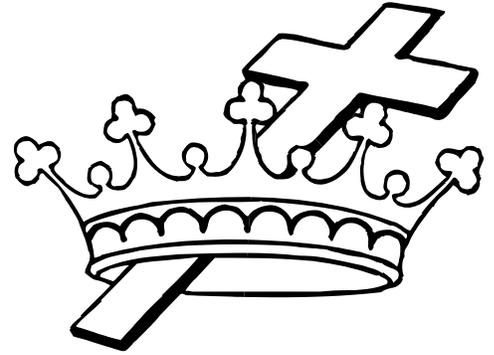
A B O W D O W N S L
 S I H A M A N J Y M
 S H U S H A N W G O
 A P U R I M P V A R
 S N X W G A E A L D
 S C E P T E R S L E
 I O R F M S I H O C
 N W X E C T S T W A
 A T E A E H H I S I
 T X S S P E R S I A
 E V Y T V R K I L L

Passages

Acts 5:29 -We ought to obey God rather than men.

Revelation 2:10 - "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Psalm 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.



God, through the Holy Spirit in the Word, has led us to Jesus.

Hymn & Prayer - *Worship Supplement 2000 #785*

Children of the heav'nly Father
Safely in His bosom gather;
Nestling bird nor star in heaven
Such a refuge e'er was given.

God His own doth tend and nourish;
In His holy courts they flourish.
From all evil things He spares them;
In His mighty arms He bears them.

Neither life nor death shall ever
From the Lord His children sever;
Unto them His grace He showeth,
And their sorrows all He knoweth.

Though He giveth or He taketh,
God His children ne'er forsaketh;
His the loving purpose solely
To preserve them pure and holy. Amen.