

# Church of God Sunday School

## ESTHER PLEADS FOR THE JEWS

Esther 3-10

This beautiful Old Testament account shows us how God works things for the good of His people.

King Ahasuerus (uh-haz'yoo-EE-ruhs), the King of Persia (PUHR-zhuh), had chosen the young Jewish woman, Esther, to be his new queen in the place of Queen Vashti (VASH-tye), who had disobeyed his wishes. Sometime after that, the king promoted a man in his kingdom. The man's name was Haman.

Haman (HAY-muhn) was a proud, clever, and deceitful man. He was always ready to please the king, so the king honored him by setting him over all the princes. King Ahasuerus commanded all his servants to reverence Haman and to bow to him whenever he was near. But one man would not bow to Haman. That man was Mordecai (MOR-duh-kye) the Jew.

The king's servants asked Mordecai why he would not bow to Haman. Mordecai told them he was a Jew. The Jews worshiped God only and bowed to no man in worship. Daily, the servants spoke to Mordecai. They tried to get him to bow to Haman, but he would not.

Finally, they went to Haman and told him of Mordecai's refusal to bow in reverence to him. They also told Haman that Mordecai was a Jew. When Haman realized that Mordecai would not bow to him because he was Jew, Haman wanted to do away with every Jew in the kingdom! He knew they would not reverence him either.

Haman wanted to get revenge on Mordecai and the Jews, but he wanted to do it in a way that would not bring a reproach on himself. He went to the king and said: "There is a certain people scattered abroad and



dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all the people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them [or to put up with them].

"If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries."

King Ahasuerus knew very little of the Jews and their way of life. (Remember, he did not know that his own Queen Esther was a Jewess.)

The king trusted Haman. He thought Haman knew all about these people and why they ought to be destroyed. So he gave Haman his ring; that meant Haman could take care of having the people destroyed, all in the name of the king.

The king also gave Haman permission to have letters written, saying that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, every Jew in the kingdom was to be killed and their belongings were to be taken.

But God was working for His people, the Jews. Now you can begin to see how God's Hand worked.

When Mordecai the Jew heard of that law, he put on sackcloth with ashes and went out into the city and up to the king's gate, crying with a loud and bitter cry. All the Jews were weeping, wailing, and fasting, and many were lying in sackcloth.

Queen Esther heard that Mordecai was clothed in sackcloth, and she tried to give him some clean clothes, but he would not put them on. She wanted to know why and sent Hatach (hath-AWK) to find out the reason.



Mordecai told him all about the money Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasury, to have the Jews destroyed. Mordecai gave Hatach a copy of the decree to show Esther. He told Hatach to tell Esther to go to the king and plead for mercy for her people.

Hatach came to Esther. He told her Mordecai's words. She told Hatach to tell Mordecai about a certain law. The law stated that if any person came into the inner court without being asked, that person would be put to death unless the king held out his golden scepter to the person. The king had not called for Esther for thirty days.

Mordecai sent word back to Esther, saying that she should not think she could escape because she was in the king's palace. If she did not say anything, help would come from somewhere else, but she and her family would be killed. Mordecai felt that Esther had been chosen queen for just this time.

Again, Esther sent word to Mordecai. This time she told him to have all the Jews fast for three days. She and her maidens would fast too. Then she would go in to the king—and if she perished, she perished.

On the third day Esther went to the inner court. She stood, waiting for the king's reaction. When the king saw Esther in the court, he held out the golden scepter to her. Esther touched the end of the scepter, and the king asked Esther what she wanted. She told him she wanted him and Haman to come to a banquet. It was just for them. The king agreed and had Haman notified.

At the banquet, the king asked her what she wanted, because he knew she must have a reason for giving the banquet. Esther asked only that he and Haman come to another banquet the next day. She would tell him then.

Haman was full of pride that day. When he got home, he told his wife and friends that only he and the king had been invited to Queen Esther's banquet and that tomorrow just the two of them were invited to another banquet given by Queen Esther.

But Haman was still angry at Mordecai. Mordecai had not bowed to Haman at the king's gate that day. Haman's wife and friends suggested that he have a gallows (two upright beams with a cross piece in the middle) made; then he could ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on them. That was what Haman did.

Now on that same night, King Ahasuerus could not sleep, so he had his book of records, or chronicles, read to him. When the servant read how Mordecai had saved the king from being murdered, the king wanted

to know if anything had been done for Mordecai. The servant said no, nothing had been done.

It was about then that Haman came to the palace to ask the king to have Mordecai hanged. The king called Haman in. He said he wanted to ask his advice about honoring a certain man. He did not give Mordecai's name. Now Haman was so proud, he thought surely the king must mean him! So, he told King Ahasuerus to put his own kingly robe and crown on the man and let him be led through the town on his own horse, while it was proclaimed: "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour."

The king liked Haman's advice, so he told him: "Make haste . . . and do even so to Mordecai the Jew." Haman was shocked, but he went and did it. Afterward, he was so embarrassed that he hurried home, with his head covered! He told his wife what had happened. She said if Mordecai was a Jew, Haman would surely fall before him.

Soon Haman was summoned to Esther's second banquet. After that banquet, Queen Esther told the king that she and her people were to be destroyed. The king wanted to know who would do such a thing. Esther turned to the king and said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman."

The king was so angry that he ran out of the palace! Haman fell before Esther to plead for mercy. When the king came back in, he thought Haman was trying to harm Esther, and he was furious! One of the king's men told the king about Haman's gallows, and the king told him to take Haman and hang him on those gallows immediately!

On that same day, King Ahasuerus gave Haman's house to Esther. When Esther told the king of her relation to Mordecai the Jew, he gave Mordecai his ring, and Esther set Mordecai over Haman's house.

When Esther asked the king to spare her people, the king told Mordecai to write a new decree. It reversed the old law. Instead of being killed, the Jews could fight for their lives, which is what they did. Many of their enemies were killed, and in the end, the Jews prospered. Mordecai was promoted in the king's palace, and he was also a great man among his people.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"He that shall humble himself shall be exalted."  
—Matthew 23:11*

# Spiral Word Search

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AHASUERUS  
 VASHTI  
 ESTHER  
 HAMAN  
 MORDECAI  
 JEW  
 KINGDOM  
 SACKCLOTH  
 HATACH  
 SCEPTER  
 MAIDENS  
 BANQUET  
 COURT  
 GALLOWS  
 DECREE  
 PALACE

Queen Esther



## The King Holds Out the Golden Scepter