



Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

Esther Saves the Jews – The King's Edict

¹ That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came into the presence of the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her. ² The king took off his signet ring, which he had reclaimed from Haman, and presented it to Mordecai. And Esther appointed him over Haman's estate.


Q1. Suddenly, the ownership of Haman's estate changed from a Jew-hater to a Jew. What becomes of Haman's wife Zeresh, his children, and his friends?

 [The king] bestowed upon [Queen Esther] the whole estate belonging to [Haman:] his family, his lands, his goods, his servants, his cattle, with all the money he had treasured up. All this is included here in his house, which, being justly forfeited to the king, is no less justly bestowed by him upon the queen, to compensate, in some degree, the danger to which Haman had exposed her. [©about 1800, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments* by Joseph Benson. Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/esther/8-1.htm>]

Esther 5:10^b-11, 14 [NIV-1984] [We previously studied Esther, chapter 5:]

^{10b} Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, ¹¹ Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. . . .

¹⁴ His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet high, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go with the king to the dinner and be happy." This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the gallows built.

 From the narrative it seems unlikely that the king had previously met Mordecai. (The king had delegated to Haman the parading of the honored Mordecai through the streets of Susa.) Now, the king has before him the man who saved him from assassination and the man who was a father to his queen.

Q2. Do you think the king was grateful to Mordecai?

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³ Esther again pleaded with the king, falling at his feet, and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite, which he had devised against the Jews.

Q3. Haman was dead, so why was Queen Esther still concerned about the health and safety of her fellow-Jews?

⁴ Then the king extended the gold scepter to Esther and she arose and stood before him.


⁵ "If it pleases the king," she said, "and if he regards me with favor and thinks it the right thing to do, and if he is pleased with me, let an order be written overruling the dispatches that Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, devised and wrote to destroy the Jews in all the king's provinces.

⁶ For how can I bear to see disaster fall on my people? How can I bear to see the destruction of my family?"

Q4. Is it a simple thing to overrule an edict from the king (see verse 8^b ↓)?

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Day 2

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⁷ King Xerxes replied to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Because Haman attacked the Jews, I have given his estate to Esther, and they have hanged him on the gallows. ⁸ Now write another decree in the king's name in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king's signet ring -- for no document written in the king's name and sealed with his ring can be revoked."

Q5. What is the issue about overruling Haman's previous edict?

Q6. What is the king instructing Mordecai and his queen to devise?

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⁹ At once the royal secretaries were summoned -- on the twenty-third day of the third month, the month of Sivan. They wrote out all Mordecai's orders to the Jews, and to the satraps, governors, and nobles of the 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush. These orders were written in the script of each province and the language of each people and also to the Jews in their own script and language. ¹⁰ Mordecai wrote in the name of King Xerxes, sealed the dispatches with the king's signet ring, and sent them by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king.

Q7. Mordecai has devised a plan to counter Haman's death sentence of the Jews. Why were "Mordecai's orders . . . written in the script of each province and the language of each people and also to the Jews in their own script and language"?

¹¹ The king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill, and annihilate any armed force of any nationality or province that might attack them and their women and children; and to plunder the property of their enemies.

¹² The day appointed for the Jews to do this in all the provinces of King Xerxes was the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

Q8. Verse 12 specifies the date the Jews could assemble and protect themselves. What was the date Haman specified to annihilate and plunder the Jews?

Esther 3:8-13 [NIV-1984] [We previously studied Esther, chapter 3:]

⁸ Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed and scattered among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom whose customs are different from those of all other people and who do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. ⁹ If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will put ten thousand talents of silver into the royal treasury for the men who carry out this business."

¹⁰ So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. ¹¹ "Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please."

¹² Then, on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote


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out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all Haman's orders to the king's satraps, the governors of the various provinces, and the nobles of the various peoples. These were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring.

¹³ Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jews – young and old, women and little children – on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.


Q9. How did Mordecai's edict counter Haman's?

Q10. Does the edict allow the Jews to initiate armed conflict or to defend themselves?

 “The fixed and unalterable character claimed for Persian edicts often placed the king in a very awkward dilemma; for, however bitterly he might regret things done in a moment of haste and thoughtlessness, it was beyond even his power to prevent the consequences. This was the reason on account of which the king was laid under a necessity not to reverse, but to issue a contradictory edict; according to which it was enacted that if, pursuant to the first decree, the Jews were assaulted, they might, by virtue of the second, defend themselves and even slay their enemies. However strange and even ridiculous this mode of procedure may appear, it was the only one which, from the peculiarities of court etiquette in Persia, could be adopted. . . Many passages of the Bible attest the truth of this, particularly the well-known incident of Daniel's being cast into the den of lions, in conformity with the rash decree of [King] Darius, though, as it afterwards appeared, contrary to the personal desire of that monarch.” [©1882, *A Commentary, Critical, Practical, and Explanatory on the Old and New Testaments* by Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/esther/8-11.htm>]

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Day 3

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¹³ A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.


Q11. The Jews were a conquered people, a subservient people. How might Mordecai's edict serve to empower them?

Q12. Would the local government officials help to arm the Jews?


Q13. What might be a person's motive if they refused to help the Jews to create a defense?

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Day 4

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¹⁴ The couriers, riding the royal horses, raced out, spurred on by the king's command. And the edict was also issued in the citadel of Susa.

 After Haman issued the decree to annihilate all of the Jews in the kingdom, we read that the citizens of Susa were generally:

Esther 3:15b

[NIV-1984] The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was bewildered.

[English Standard Version (ESV)] And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

[The Message (MSG)] The king and Haman sat back and had a drink while the city of Susa reeled from the news.

[New American Standard Bible (NASB)] while the king and Haman sat down to drink, the city of Susa was agitated.

Q14. The various Biblical versions described the citizens of Susa as bewildered, confused, reeling from the news, and agitated. None of the descriptions used the word joy, or happy. Were the citizens of Susa generally happy or sad at Haman's edict? And were the citizens generally supportive or unsupportive of the edict? Why?


Happy? }
Sad? } Why?

Supportive? }
Unsupportive? } Why?

Q15. How might the citizens of Susa react to the newest edict?

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Day 5

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The Jews Triumph

¹⁵ Mordecai left the king's presence wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large crown of gold and a purple robe of fine linen. And the city of Susa held a joyous celebration.

Q16. Based on our reading of Esther, how would you describe the king's honors bestowed upon Mordecai?

Q17. How would you describe the reaction of the citizens of Susa to Mordecai?

Q18. Do you think there was a change in the manner in which the citizens of Susa honored Haman versus Mordecai?


Haman?

Mordecai?

Why?

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Day 6

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¹⁶ For the Jews it was a time of happiness and joy, gladness, and honor.

^{17a} In every province and in every city, wherever the edict of the king went, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating.

^{17b} And many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them.

Q19. Verses 16 & 17^a: Why were the Jews happy?

Q20. Verse 17^b: were the Jewish religious leaders happy with the number of new proselytes (a person newly converted to a religious faith or sect; a convert, esp. a gentile converted to Judaism; source: <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/proselytes>)?

Q21. Verse 17^b: if a proselyte became a Jew due out of fear, is that proselyte truly a believer in God?

Q22. Verse 17^b: Is there a true change in the proselyte's heart?

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Q23. Verse 17^b: In the United States, today, there is a movement that wants the American government and society, in general, to adopt Christianity as the only religion. While we, who believe in the saving grace of Christ Jesus (God died to save us), agree that Christianity is the one true religion, (1) how effective (heart-changing) is Christianity-by-law on a non-believer? (2) How does God view the heart condition of the Christianity-by-law on a non-believer?

(1) Effectiveness?

(2) God's view of the heart?

Matthew 28:16, 18-20 [NIV-1984] [The Great Commission]

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. . . .

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Q24. What is the difference between a person who agrees to do something because they want to do so, versus a person who is forced to do something by law? Are we successful in following the Ten Commandments?

Q25. In your opinion, what is the most effective way in spreading the Gospel of Christ Jesus? By law or decree? By our personal example? By confronting – getting in their face – a person who is committing evil? By forcing a person to listen to a sermon(s)? Others? How do we ‘entice’ a person to want to become a Believer? (This is a question that has perplexed the greatest theologians throughout Christian history.)

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