

<p>Bible Text New International Version</p>	<p>Who are the people involved and what is the situation?</p>	<p>What traits of God are displayed in this story? What are the traits of the people?</p>	<p>In what ways do you see yourself in this story? How is God inviting you to respond?</p>
<p>Esther 8:1-17 The King’s Edict in Behalf of the Jews</p> <p>8 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. ²The 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.</p> <p>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. ⁴Then the king extended the gold scepter to Esther and she arose and stood before him.</p> <p>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. ⁶For how can I bear to see disaster fall on my people? How can I bear to see the destruction of my family?”</p> <p>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 impaled him on the pole he set up. ⁸Now 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.” <i>(continued)</i></p>			

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<p>Esther 8:1-17 – <i>continued</i></p> <p>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.^[a] 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.</p> <p>¹¹ The king’s edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill and annihilate the armed men of any nationality or province who might attack them and their women and children,^[b] 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. 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.</p> <p>¹⁴ The couriers, riding the royal horses, went out, spurred on by the king’s command, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. (<i>continued</i>)</p> <p>a. Esther 8:9 - That is, the upper Nile region. b. Esther 8:11 - Or <i>province, together with their women and children, who might attack them;</i></p>			

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<p>Esther 8:1-17 – <i>continued</i> The Triumph of the Jews ¹⁵ When Mordecai left the king’s presence, he was 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. ¹⁶ For the Jews it was a time of happiness and joy, gladness and honor. ¹⁷ In every province and in every city to which the edict of the king came, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating. And many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them.</p> <p>Esther 9:1-16 ⁹ On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them. ² The Jews assembled in their cities in all the provinces of King Xerxes to attack those determined to destroy them. No one could stand against them, because the people of all the other nationalities were afraid of them. ³ And all the nobles of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and the king’s administrators helped the Jews, because fear of Mordecai had seized them. ⁴ Mordecai was prominent in the palace; his reputation spread throughout the provinces, and he became more and more powerful. ⁵ The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and they did what they pleased to those who hated them. ⁶ In the citadel of Susa, the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. (<i>continued</i>)</p>			

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<p>Esther 9:1-16 – <i>continued</i></p> <p>⁷ They also killed Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, ⁸ Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, ⁹ Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizatha, ¹⁰ the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. But they did not lay their hands on the plunder.</p> <p>¹¹ The number of those killed in the citadel of Susa was reported to the king that same day. ¹² The king said to Queen Esther, “The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman in the citadel of Susa. What have they done in the rest of the king’s provinces? Now what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? It will also be granted.”</p> <p>¹³ “If it pleases the king,” Esther answered, “give the Jews in Susa permission to carry out this day’s edict tomorrow also, and let Haman’s ten sons be impaled on poles.”</p> <p>¹⁴ So the king commanded that this be done. An edict was issued in Susa, and they impaled the ten sons of Haman. ¹⁵ The Jews in Susa came together on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and they put to death in Susa three hundred men, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.</p> <p>¹⁶ Meanwhile, the remainder of the Jews who were in the king’s provinces also assembled to protect themselves and get relief from their enemies. They killed seventy-five thousand of them but did not lay their hands on the plunder.</p>			

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<p>Esther 9:29-32 ²⁹ So Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter concerning Purim. ³⁰ And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of Xerxes' kingdom—words of goodwill and assurance— ³¹ to establish these days of Purim at their designated times, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had decreed for them, and as they had established for themselves and their descendants in regard to their times of fasting and lamentation. ³² Esther's decree confirmed these regulations about Purim, and it was written down in the records.</p>			

Reflections

Esther demonstrated an unwavering trust in God which gave her the courage to put her own life in peril to serve Him and His people. Though you may never be called to risk your life for your faith, what risks have you been called to take for the sake of serving God? What fears hold you back?

We can trust that God is in control, even when the circumstances seem impossible in human terms. Give an example of how this kind of trust has been required of you in the circumstances of your life, in the life of a loved one, or in the world today. We do not always see God's hand moving in our lives. Looking back, share an example of what God has done or is doing now?

The God Who Sees: a Study of Women in the Bible

Prayer Requests
