

## GOD HAS A PLAN FOR YOU

The Persians defeated the Babylonians and became the world's most powerful country. King Ahasuerus was king from 486-466 B.C. In 483 B.C., the king was banqueting and drinking with many of the nobles while his wife Vashti was hosting the women. In his drunken foolishness, he commanded that Vashti come to display her beauty before the men. She refused to do this immodest thing. The angry king asked the advice of his counselors. The disappointed men advised the king to remove her as queen so that all their wives would not follow her example of standing up to their husbands.

Secular history tells us that Ahasuerus went to battle against the Greeks and lost the famous battle of Thermopylae and also at Salamis. When he returned, women who had been prepared for a whole year each appeared before the king as decided whom to select. He chose Esther, who had been raised by her uncle Mordecai (he was great-grandson of a Benjamite named Kish that had been taken captive to Babylon more than 100 years earlier). Esther became queen in 479 B.C.

Mordecai spent much time at the gate to hear news of Esther before and after she became queen. In his position, Mordecai heard of a conspiracy to kill the king, and he reported it. The conspirators were hanged.

Later, the king appointed Haman to be his royal vizier. He was arrogant, and he loved the attention he received. However, Mordecai refused to bow down to him. In his wrath, Haman arranged for the king to make a law that not only Mordecai be punished for his resoluteness; vengeful Haman wanted all of the Jews killed because of Mordecai. A day was set to kill the Jews.

Of course, Mordecai and all the Jews began wailing and fasting when the law was proclaimed. When Esther heard about Mordecai's inappropriate behavior at the king's gate, she then learned of the reason behind it. Mordecai told Esther that she was also in danger as a Jewess. She needed to use her position to do what she could about Haman's evil plan. He finished by saying, "*Who knows whether you have come into the kingdom for such a time as this?*" (**Esther 4:14**)

This is the main idea in the book. Though God is not specifically mentioned in the Book of Esther, the providence of God is clear throughout the story. The specifics of providence is an area of God's work that we must be careful about in the present, but we often can clearly see with hindsight (**Genesis 50:20**). **If we do what is right, God will bless us.**

Mordecai challenges Esther to do what is right. If she were to be short-sighted and think of only saving herself by keeping quiet, Mordecai pointed out that she and her family would die anyway; and God would raise another deliverer for His people. The post-captivity Jews believed Isaiah and Jeremiah's prophecies concerning the preservation of the Jews.

Esther had the same faith as Mordecai. She did explain what was at stake for her to approach the king uninvited. If the king was not in the mood to have her come in, she would be executed for presuming to come into his presence uninvited. So she told Mordecai to tell all the Jews to fast and pray for her three days and nights.

God heard their prayers and kept His promise to make sure that the Jewish people would continue. Esther was able to approach the king; he held out his scepter as a sign of his

acceptance of her presence. She requested a banquet she prepared for Haman and the king that day. At the banquet, the king offered to do whatever Esther requested (up to half of the kingdom). She simply asked for them to come to a banquet the next day.

Haman went home elated. He boasted to his family and friends about all the special privileges and honors he had, especially with being the only person to eat with the king and queen. Yet, he still was so miserable because Mordecai was still alive and refusing to bow when he passed by. They suggested that he prepare gallows for him to be hanged.

That night, the king couldn't sleep and asked his archivists to look up a case where someone saved his life from a conspiracy. They found that Mordecai was the hero, but no reward had been given to him.

The next day, the king asked Haman how he should honor someone he would like to honor. Arrogantly assuming he was the one the king would want to honor, he told him to get the king's robe, the king's horse with the royal crest, the highest noble to humbly lead him in the public square as he was king for a day. The king said that was a good idea so go do it for Mordecai. He had no choice but to do it, but he went home humiliated. His family correctly warned this turn of events predicts a bad outcome for him to oppose Mordecai.

Immediately, he was summoned to the banquet. At the banquet, Esther then asked the king to save her life and the life of her people. Then Esther identified Haman as the culprit of this scheme. In his anger, the king had Haman hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai to be killed. Mordecai replaced Haman as royal vizier.

With the king's authority, the foolish law of the destruction of the Jews could not be rescinded; but a new law was passed that enabled the Jews to defend themselves against any who wished to attack them. The day of annihilation became a day of deliverance. Let us also live by faith in God's providence!