



Esther found favor in the eyes of the king. Now that she had the king's attention, what would she do? Would she be able to stop the evil plan that was made against her people?

In truth, it was **God** who was working out His plan to save His people, because God is faithful to keep His promises, no matter what people choose to do.

Day #1: Slow to Speak

Everyone has entertained the question: "What would you ask for if you could have anything in the world?" What would *you* ask for? This very question was posed to Esther.

After Queen Esther came to the King without being called for, King Xerxes knew that she must have something very important to ask him. After all, she had risked her life to approach him.

† *The King asked, "What is it, Queen Esther? What do you want? I'll give it to you. I'll even give you up to half of my kingdom." - Esther 5:3*

The most powerful man in the most important kingdom of its time offered Esther to name anything she wanted. Esther did not take this opportunity to rush ahead and ask the King to take back his orders concerning the Jews. Instead, she invited King Xerxes and Haman to a big dinner. Haman and the king gladly accepted Esther's invitation. At that dinner, the King asked Esther what it was that she wanted. Again, he offered her up to half his kingdom. This time, Esther invited the King and Haman to another big dinner the next night.

We don't know for sure why Esther did this. Perhaps she was afraid to tell her husband that she was one of the Jews. Perhaps it was because Esther knew that King Xerxes often made quick decisions without much thought. Maybe she was simply following God's leading.

* Esther lived out an important Biblical principle. The Bible says we should be patient (Galatians 5:22). We should be slow to speak, but quick to listen (James 1:19). When you have an important task in front of you, be patient. Wait for God to guide your steps.

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him. - Psalm 37:7a NIV

If you have trouble being patient, ask God to help you. Write this verse on a card and keep it with you. Pray these words back to God.

Day #2: Unwise Friends

After Esther's second banquet, Haman was feeling very happy. He thought of how important he was to be the only man besides the King who was invited to the queen's dinners. But suddenly, he saw something that changed his mood. As he walked by Mordecai, he became furious when Mordecai would not bow down to him.

† *So he burned with anger against him. - Esther 5:9b*
He went home and bragged to all of his friends and family about how important he was. He talked about how rich he was, and how many sons he had. He said that he was greater than all the other officials in the kingdom.

But even all of that doesn't satisfy me. I won't be satisfied as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the palace gate." - Esther 5:10b-12

Haman's wife and his friends gave him some terrible advice. They told him he should build a tall tower where he could have Mordecai hanged. Haman was thrilled with this idea, and he had the gallows built. None of his friends told him that his hatred was wrong. No one told him that he should be thankful for his many blessings and to forget about Mordecai. Instead, they encouraged his prideful ways. Haman's behavior would soon be his downfall.

* The Bible tells us to choose friends who will encourage us to be more godly (Proverbs 27:17). List your friends and family members who help you to make wise decisions, according to God's word. This week, write a note to thank one of those people for being a good influence in your life. Remember to be this kind of friend to others!

Day #3: Honored Man

Do you ever have trouble falling asleep? Do you have any tricks that help you fall asleep? If you were a wealthy king (before television was invented) you might call one of your servants to read you the thick history book of the kingdom.

Late in the evening, after Esther's special dinner, King Xerxes could not fall asleep. Perhaps he was lying awake wondering what Esther wanted to ask him. He called for the Chronicles, or history book, of his reign to be read to him. Instead of getting sleepy, the King was getting interested in one of the stories. It was the story of when Mordecai saved the King's life by telling on the two guards who were planning to kill him. Mordecai had never been rewarded for saving the King. King

Day #3 continued:

Xerxes wanted to **honor Mordecai** in some way. Just as he was thinking about what to do, Haman walked into the court. Haman came to ask the king's permission to **hang Mordecai!**

Before Haman said anything, the King asked Haman what should be done to honor a man whom the King favored. Haman was sure the King wanted to honor **him**, so he told Xerxes to let the man wear the King's robe, and ride on the King's horse. He should be led throughout the kingdom so all the people could admire him.



*"Go right away," the King commanded Haman. "Get the robe. Bring the horse. Do exactly what you have suggested. **Do it for the Jew Mordecai.**" - Esther 6:10a*

Just imagine the look on Haman's face when he heard those words! He had to lead his worst enemy through the streets of the kingdom, proclaiming the King's favor on him.



Discuss how Isaiah 2:11 describes what happened to Haman. It says, "A man who brags will be brought low. Men who are proud will be put to shame."

Day #4: Esther Asks

Has anyone ever told you they needed to talk to you... later? These talks are almost always important. In fact, you might get a little nervous about such a talk. You wonder if it is a "good" talk or a "bad" talk.

After Esther had put off asking her question to the King two times before, we can be sure that King Xerxes was extremely curious by the time he and Haman arrived at Esther's second banquet. Again, he promised Esther that she could have up to half of all that he owned.



Then Queen Esther answered, "King Xerxes, I hope you will show me your favor. I hope you will be pleased to let me live. That's what I want. Please spare my people. That's my appeal to you. My people and I have been sold to be destroyed. We've been sold to be killed and wiped out." - Esther 7:2b-4a

Esther finally said it! But, the King did not yet know that she was a Jew, so he did not realize that Esther was talking about Haman's wicked plot. Finally Esther explained that she was a Jew and it was Haman who wanted to kill her and all her people. Surely Haman was shocked to find out that Esther was a Jew. He fell to his knees and begged Queen Esther to have mercy on him. At just that moment, one of the King's servants came in and told King Xerxes about the tower Haman had built so he could hang Mordecai.

"Hang Haman from his own tower!" the king commanded. - Esther 7:9 CEV

Day #4 continued:

God had promised many years before that He would curse anyone who cursed the Jewish people (Genesis 12:3). Haman ordered a deadly curse on the Jews, and in so doing, he sealed his own fate.



Haman had written a royal order that cursed an entire race of people. We would not likely write a curse on someone, but the Bible says we often curse people with our tongue. We use our mouth to praise God, then turn around and curse people with unkind words (James 3:9-10). Ask God to remind you of anyone you have spoken unkind words to. (This may include parents, brothers, and sisters.) Pray for forgiveness, and go to the person to ask their forgiveness. Ask God to help you control your tongue (James 3:8).

Day #5: God is in Control

So Haman was hanged, and King Xerxes replaced Haman with Mordecai. But the royal order for all Jews to be killed could not be undone. Mordecai asked the King to give an additional order which stated that all the Jews could use weapons to protect themselves. Their enemies became afraid of them, and **the Jews were not destroyed.**

God had made a promise about the Jewish people:



I will make you into a great nation. - Genesis 12:2a

They would be important and large in number. If Haman's plan had worked, most of the Jews would have been destroyed. God had made a promise, and God ALWAYS keeps his promises.

Even though Esther's story is full of people who chose to sin, God was still in control. Over and over, the right people entered the scene at the right time. Notice how **God moved people** to be at certain places at certain times.

- Esther was chosen to be queen.
- Mordecai overheard the two officials plotting to kill the King.
- Haman entered the King's court just after the King read the history book.
- Esther had a second banquet which allowed Mordecai to be honored, and Haman to be humbled.
- The King's servant entered with news of the tower Haman had built to hang Mordecai, just as the King was deciding Haman's fate.

These events were not just coincidence! **God works in the lives of all different kinds of people to bring about what He wants.**



Discuss any difficult situation you, a friend, or a family member may be facing. Take the situation to the Lord in prayer. Thank the Lord that He is in control, and ask Him to work everything together for His glory.