

Esther was an orphan of the tribe of Benjamin, living in exile in Persia. She was brought up by her cousin Mordecai. Esther was selected by King Ahasuerus to be Queen from a harem of beautiful young women who he had ordered gather from all corners of his realm.

The story of Esther is in five parts:

Part 1

Mordecai discovers that two guards have conspired to kill King Ahasuerus and tells Queen Esther who reports this news to the King. After the conspirators are killed the King appointed Haman as head of all the officials. Everyone below him were required to bow to Haman but Mordecai refused. His reason was that he was a Jew. Haman was furious and plotted to kill all the Jews. Under the seal of the King's ring, Haman sent out a decree throughout the country that all Jews, men, women and children were to be killed on one particular day.

Part 2

The response to this decree by all the Jews including Mordecai and Esther is found in [Esther 4:1-17](#)

When Queen Esther is asked by Mordecai to plea with the King for her people's deliverance, she informs him that this action could result in her being killed. The reason that she could be killed was because no one was to enter the Kings court unless they were called to come to the court. The exception to this rule was that should the King hold his sceptre for the uninvited person to enter they were safe. Esther, finally persuaded by Mordecai to plead with the king, states "*If I perish, I perish.*" She also ordered a fast for three days for all Jews including her and her maids.

Part 3

Queen Esther is admitted to the Court and invites the King and Haman to a banquet. Haman, though excited by the honour, is still angered by Mordecai's indifference to him and he plans to hang Mordecai. At the same time, King Ahasuerus realizes that he has not honoured Mordecai for reporting the plot to kill the King. He asks Haman what the king should do for a man he wishes to honour. Haman mistakenly assumes that he Haman will be honoured, tells the King an elaborate honour only to discover it is Mordecai who will be honoured.

[The King Honours Mordecai](#)

Part 4

King Ahasuerus and Haman attend Queen Esther's banquet. And on the second day the King asks the Queen, "What is your petition Queen Esther and what is your request? "

The Queen replies, ***'If I have won your favour, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is my request. ⁴ For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king.***

The King replies: ***"Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this"***

Queen Esther responds, ***"A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!"***

Haman was hung on the gallows prepared for Mordecai.

[Esther7:3-10](#)

You can read about the honour bestowed on Mordecai at

[Esther 8:1-17](#)

Part 5

The actions of Queen Esther led to the Jews being able to defend themselves against their enemies. Mordecai became next in rank to King Ahasuerus and was powerful among the Jews.

[Esther 9, 10](#)

At the end of fighting Mordecai and Queen Esther inaugurated the Feast of Purim.

[Esther 9:18-23](#)

29 Queen Esther daughter of Abihail, along with the Jew Mordecai, gave full written authority, confirming this second letter about Purim. 30 Letters were sent wishing peace and security to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, 31 and giving orders that these days of Purim should be observed at their appointed seasons, as the Jew Mordecai and Queen Esther enjoined on the Jews, just as they had laid down for themselves and for their descendants regulations concerning their fasts and their lamentations. 32 The command of Queen Esther fixed these practices of Purim, and it was recorded in writing.

[Esther 9:29-32](#)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Esther is the only book in the bible where God's name is not mentioned.

What practices demonstrate God's presence in the life of Mordecai, the people and Queen Esther?

What do you think Queen Esther meant when she said "If I perish, I perish"?

Esther risked all to stand up for her faith and her faith community. Under what circumstances have we been asked to stand up for our faith?