

The Persian Press

ALL THE NEWS FROM INDIA TO CUSH



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Teacher's Copy

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Created for use with young, unchurched learners
Adaptable for all ages including adults

The Persian Press

ESTHER 7:1-10:3

HAMAN'S END

**HEAD-
LINES:**

- Queen Esther reveals Haman's plan
- Haman receives the death he planned for Mordecai
- Queen Esther approaches the king uninvited again
- The Jews are allowed to Defend themselves
- The feast of Purim is instituted

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EXTRA, EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

We last reported that Haman was taken to the palace to eat with the king and queen. After a difficult day of parading Mordecai around town, Haman had gone home to rest. His wife was just telling him, "If this Mordecai is in fact a Jew, your bad luck has only begun. You don't stand a chance against him—you're as good as ruined." (Esther 6:13 MSG)

So Haman and the king ate with the queen again in the dining hall. And, just as he did the day before, the king asked the queen, "What's up, Queen Esther? What do you need? Tell me and I'll give it to you. I'll give you as much as half of my kingdom." Since she fasted, Esther had been waiting on God for just the right moment, so it was now that she answered the king. "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." (Esther 7:3 NIV) Esther continued by telling the king that her people were to be destroyed - killed, wiped out. She even explained that had it only been to sell them into slavery she wouldn't have even bothered him.

The king wanted to know who could do such a thing and Esther

revealed that is was Haman.

Haman knew what the king would do to him. He was terrified, falling all over Esther to beg for his life. The king had him carried away and hanged on the very pole he had prepared for Mordecai.

"That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther everything Haman owned." (Esther 8:1 NIV) The king also honored Mordecai. Esther told the king that he was her cousin. The king gave Mordecai his royal ring, the one that sealed important documents and that the king had taken away from Haman. The queen has put Mordecai in charge of everything that had belonged to Haman. Mordecai is even dressing in royal clothes, blue, white, and purple. He's even wearing a large, gold crown.

But there is still a problem. Remember, Persian law can't be changed, so there is still an order for the 13th day of the 12th month to kill all the Jews. That's only nine months away now. Because of this, Esther came before the king again, uninvited. "She fell at his feet and sobbed. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman . . . The king reached out his gold rod toward Esther. . . . 'King Xerxes, I hope you will show me your favor,' she said. 'I hope you will

think that what I'm asking is the right think to do. I hope you are pleased with me. If you are, and if it pleases you, let an order be written. Let it take place of the messages Haman wrote.'" (Esther 8:3-5 NIV) The king suggested that another order be written in his name, and sealed with his royal seal. Another order was written. It would give the Jews in every city the right to defend themselves if attacked. The order was written in every language spoken throughout the Persian Empire, even in Hebrew, the language of the Jews. It was sent from India to Cush (Ethiopia), all 127 territories of the Persian Empire.

On the day that the Jews were attacked, they defended themselves. In Susa they defended themselves again on the 14th, then on the 15th they rested. "They made it a day to celebrate with great joy. And they enjoyed good food." (Esther 9:18 NIV) They called the day Purim and agreed to celebrate it every year with good food, giving presents to each other.

Reporting from Susa: Fortress of the Persian Empire



WHAT IS PURIM?

Purim is a feast, or holiday, celebrated by the Jews. It began with our lesson - during the times of King Xerxes and Queen Esther. It is to celebrate "the time when they got rest from their enemies." (Esther 9:22 NIRV)

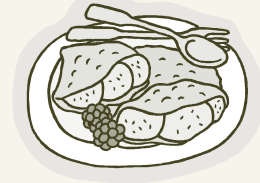
Purim, the name of the celebration, comes from the word *pur*. *Pur* means "lot," and the word "lot" is where our word "lottery" comes from.

"Haman . . . had been the enemy of all of the Jews. He

had planned to destroy them. He had cast the lot to destroy them completely. The lot was also called *pur*." (Esther 9:24 NIRV)

Now that we know that the feast of Purim comes from the word *pur* which means "lot," maybe you are wondering what a "lot" is. A "lot" is an object, any object really. It is a way to make decisions, like drawing a name out of a hat after you have written names on strips of paper and put them in the hat.

Purim is celebrated today much as it was during the time of Esther. The story of Esther is read, good food is eaten, and gifts of food are exchanged with friends.



Hamantaschen, or Haman's Hat, are eaten during the Purim celebration

[Make the rest of your decisions today with the *pur*, or the "lot." Write all of your students' names on strips of paper. Place the strips in a hat. When a decision needs to be made, like who will help with snack, draw a name from the hat.]

*Don't let evil
conquer you,
but conquer evil
by doing good.
Romans 12:21*

Have you thought about Queen Esther and how the king treated her. From the very beginning we see that people liked her. We have a glimpse into her attitude in our lesson.

When Queen Esther was pleading for her own life, and the lives of her people, she didn't demand her own rights. Do you remember what she said? "I hope you will show me

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your favor. I hope you will be pleased to let me live . . . Please spare my people." (Esther 7:3 NIRV) She said please, she asked for favor, and she realized that King Xerxes was her ultimate earthly authority.

When you need something, do you ask or do you demand? Do you realize that your parents and teachers have authority over you the way the king was over Esther? Are you polite?

What about when you need something from God, do you shout at Him demanding your rights? Or do you realize that what you really deserve from God is eternal punishment, death? Have you come to Him humbly, asking Him to remove your sin and give you life, life with Him? Won't you do that today?

And if you have, who will you tell?

BEHIND THE SCENES

Now that you know the whole story of Queen Esther and her people, can you see how God worked behind the scenes to make everything happen at just the right time.

First, Queen Vashti decided to disobey the king and was removed from the king's presence. A new queen was needed. Second, of all the girls the king could have cho-

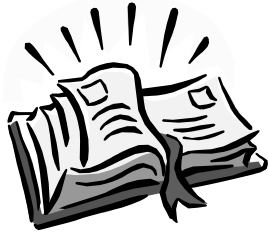
sen, he chose Esther, a Jew. Third, Esther trusted God and was willing to speak to the king, even if it meant she must die. Fourth, even after thirty days of not asking for the queen, King Xerxes extended the golden staff and accepted his queen, even without an invitation. Fifth, Esther could have immediately told the king of Haman's plan, but she didn't. Sixth, Haman needed to

build a pole for Mordecai. Seven, God caused the king to have a sleepless night and to read his royal records where he discovered he had never honored Mordecai. Eight, on the day Haman planned to kill Mordecai, he was made to parade him around town. Nine, just as Haman thought things couldn't get any worse, the queen shared that she was a Jew and doomed to die accord-

ing to Haman's plan. And ten, the king accepted Queen Esther again and agreed to another order, one that would allow the Jews to defend themselves.

God's name is not mentioned once throughout the entire book of Esther, but His hand is all over it. God rules and reigns over the affairs of men!

ACTIVITIES



Hide God's Word in your heart!
Psalm 119:11

Memory Verse Activities for Romans 12:21 - Play "London Bridge" with the memory verse. Sing, "Don't let evil conquer you, conquer you, conquer you. Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good."

Talk about how evil is conquered, or overcome. It is not by fighting. It happens when good is done. Discuss how to put this verse into practice.

Provide coloring sheets that include the memory verse.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

For older students: Discuss the celebration of Purim. The Jews celebrate it to remember God's goodness to them. What has God done for you? Take time to remember and celebrate His goodness to you.

Show your students a Jewish Calendar. Talk about how it corresponds with our calendars.



*Be wise!
Remember this and
think about the
kindness of the Lord.
Psalm
107:43*

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

Help your students make gifts. Wrap them nicely and instruct your students to give them to someone they know. Encourage them to share the story of Esther with the person who receives the gift.

Make Haman's Hats. These are a turnover-like dessert filled with fruit. Use crescent rolls and when filled with the fruit of your choice, pinch them into triangles, leaving the middle open (to resemble Haman's hat).

The new order from the palace was sent out to all 127 provinces of the Persian Empire in many different languages. Bring the memory verse in several languages. (See websites like biblegateway.com.) Encourage your students to create a language of their own.

Bring coloring pages of Mordecai in his royal clothes. Remind your students that Mordecai wore blue, white, and purple clothes. He also wore a gold crown.

Make noisemakers. These are traditionally used at Purim celebrations.



Part of the celebration of Purim was the giving of gifts.



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