



Session

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## ISRAEL WAS RESCUED

### Esther 3–8

Esther was chosen to be the new queen to replace Vashti. Political life in Persia was very difficult, and for that matter, political life in any kingdom of the ancient near east was hard as wars and rebellion were constant. Subterfuge was alive and well in Ahasuerus' kingdom also. The evil Haman was seeking high position in the kingdom and was noticed by Ahasuerus who promoted Haman to one of the highest positions in the kingdom. Because of his position, whenever Haman walked through the city gates, those gathered were required to bow. One day, however, when Haman approached, Mordecai, Esther's cousin, refused to bow his knee to a man.

Haman became enraged when Mordecai refused to bow to him. Determined to rid himself of Mordecai, Haman determined that not only Mordecai, but all Jewish people, needed to be eradicated from the earth. Five years after Esther had become queen, Haman cast lots to determine on what day the Jews would be destroyed. Haman turned Ahasuerus against the Jews, and the king signed an edict granting their destruction. Esther knew her ethnic heritage, and Mordecai assured Esther that she had been given this position perhaps for this very reason, so she could save the Jews.

Mordecai's plan was for Esther to present herself to the king and ask for the release of the Jews, or at least to make it possible for them to defend themselves. Esther asked for prayer, for if she approached the king without permission, she could be killed. The king extended his scepter to Esther, and Esther invited the king and Haman to a party. At the first party, Esther invited the men to a second party. There, the arrogant Haman assumed Esther had good news, but once she revealed that the plot against the Jews was a plot against the queen, Ahasuerus ordered not only the death of Haman, but signed a new law giving the Jews the ability to defend themselves against attack. Because of Esther's faithfulness to God, the Jewish people were rescued and not a single one was harmed.