

CREATIVITY

IMAGINING WHAT YOU
COULD DO BECAUSE YOU'RE
MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE

ESTHER

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 145:3

Esther was queen of Persia—but she didn't become queen in the usual way. Her father wasn't a king, and she wasn't from a noble family. In fact, Esther was Jewish. Many of God's people had been captured and brought to Babylon when their home, Judah, was conquered. Then Babylon was taken over by Persia. So Esther grew up in a land that wasn't her own. When Esther's parents died, her cousin Mordecai raised her as his own daughter.

"Always remember what our scriptures say," he would remind her. "*Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your strength.*"

One day, a new king named Xerxes came to power in Persia. He was so impulsive that he actually fired his queen, Vashti, simply for refusing to show up a wild party.

When Xerxes finally calmed down, he realized he now had no queen. So the king decided to hold a contest. He ordered his officials to gather the most beautiful young women in the land and put them through an entire year of beauty treatments. Esther was one of the girls chosen. She actually won the contest and became the new queen of the entire land!

Just as Xerxes had so impulsively switched queens, he also promoted a royal official named Haman higher than all the other nobles of the kingdom. Haman was delighted when all the officials outside the palace bowed low

before him. But when he discovered that Mordecai refused to bow, he was enraged. He became so angry, in fact, that he made a plan to destroy not only Mordecai, but all the Jews in the land!

Haman lied as he laid it out for the king. *"Your majesty, [the Jewish people] keep themselves separate from everyone else,"* he explained. *"They don't obey your laws. It really isn't good for you to put up with them. If it pleases you, give the order to destroy them."*

Xerxes agreed to the terrible decree. Messengers took a letter all over the kingdom announcing that on the 13th day of the 12th month, all Jews were to be killed!

When Mordecai and the other Jews discovered the horrible news, they dressed in rough clothing and wept bitterly. Mordecai sent a message to Esther in the palace, telling her what Haman had done.

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but all the Jews in the land!***

"You must ask the king to save our people!" he told her.

Esther was devastated. She sent a response to her cousin. "No one can come before the king unless he sends for them," she explained. "If I do it, I'll die . . . unless he reaches out his gold scepter to me."

Mordecai sent his answer right back. "You may not escape, even though you are queen," he pointed out. *"Who knows? It's possible that you became queen for a time just like this."*

Esther knew her cousin was right. She sent another message telling him, "Gather all the Jews. Don't eat anything for three days. I and my servants will

fast, too. Then I'll go to the king's throne room."

Esther faced an impossible dilemma. But she took three days to prepare her heart and mind.

Then, heart racing, Esther entered the throne room. Across the long hall, she saw the king seated high on this throne. Breathless, she waited for him to see her. The king looked up. His dark eyes locked on Esther's face. And then . . . he smiled.

King Xerxes reached out his golden scepter. "*What is it, Queen Esther?*" he asked. "I'll give you anything, up to half of the entire kingdom!"

Esther could have made her request right away. But she knew she'd have a better chance if she made the king curious. "*King Xerxes,*" she said, "*if it pleases you, come to a feast today. I've prepared it for you. Oh . . . and bring Haman.*"

Esther created an elaborate feast for the king and his Number One official. At the meal, King Xerxes once again tried to discover what Esther wanted. "I'll give you anything—up to half of the entire kingdom if you want it!" he declared.

Once again, Esther held her ground, waiting for the perfect moment. "I'd like you and Haman to come to another feast tomorrow," she said. "*Then I'll answer your question.*"

The king agreed—and Haman spent the whole evening bragging to all his friends.

But the second feast was a different story. As before, Esther creatively prepared an incredible meal. Both Haman and the king were quick to dig in. "What do you want me to do for you?" asked the king. "*I'll even give you up to half of my kingdom.*"

Esther took a deep breath. Something told her this was the right moment.

"Your Majesty . . . let me live!" she pleaded. "Please spare my people. That's my appeal to you. [We] have been sold to be destroyed!"

Haman paled and choked on his filet, but the king's face flushed red with rage. *"Who is the man who has dared to do such a thing?"* he demanded.

Esther turned her gaze on Haman. "Haman is the one!" she cried.

In panic, Haman threw himself at the Queen, begging for his life.

"You dare attack the Queen?" snarled King Xerxes. "Take him away!"

That very night, Haman was killed. And the king created a new order that would allow the Jews to be saved. God had given Esther a surprising position in a foreign nation. And when the time was right, she used all she'd been given to save her people.



**Let's
Talk!**

Let's be real: you probably won't discover you're the queen of a powerful foreign nation any time soon.

(Unless you're on a Netflix special, that is.) But God has created you for a purpose. He's created you to do things that no one else on this entire planet can do in the same way as you! Maybe you're the absolute best person to teach your little sister to read. Maybe there are kids in your town who don't have winter coats—and you create a plan to collect jackets for them. Maybe there are lonely people in a nearby retirement community who need someone to visit and cheer them up. It might be just about anything! Share with each other if you have any ideas what some of your purpose might be. Parents, you can encourage your kids with what you see in them. Pray for each other, that God will show you both something new about your purpose this week.