

# The Book of Esther

WRITTEN BY A FORMER STAFF MEMBER  
OF SHALOM SCRIPTURE STUDIES, INC.

Much of the narrator's portion is taken directly from the Book of Esther.

Characters:

**Narrator:**

**King Ahasuerus:**

**Queen Esther:**

**Mordecai:**

**Haman:**

**Zeresh & Wisemen:**

Actors are encouraged to use various gestures, voice intonations, and props to make the presentation interesting, funny, and in general entertaining.

Scheme: In general the play will be broken up in nine acts corresponding to the chapters of Esther. In this play, chapters 9 and 10 have been combined into one act.

## **Act 1**

The Narrator will read parts of chapter 1.

**Narrator:** This is the story of Purim. Purim is the Jewish feast celebrated each year to remember the amazing events that transpired in the Kingdom of Ahasuerus of Persia in approximately the sixth century B.C.

It is an amazing story, not only because it is true, but because plans to destroy every Jewish person in that kingdom were halted by The Almighty God. The God of Israel miraculously intervened in what appeared to be a hopeless situation, and saved the Jews of the kingdom from certain death.

There are four primary characters in our story: King Ahasuerus, Mordecai, Queen Esther, and the wicked Haman.

We begin our story in Act 1 with King Ahasuerus holding a great feast. King Ahasuerus was a man of great wealth and power. Everyone in the kingdom bowed to Ahasuerus from the greatest to the least, from the wealthiest to the poorest.

I now read for you from the Book of Esther in The Holy Scriptures.

(read verses one through five as follows) Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, that when the king sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace, in the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him,

When he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty a hundred eighty days, then the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great an small, seven days in the court of the garden of the king's palace.

So we see that all was merry in the kingdom, but on the seventh day of the feast, the king became extremely upset. Why? Because he had requested that the Queen come to show off her beauty, but she refused . . .

**Ahasuerus:** (angry) What! (look a little embarrassed, then look proud) What do you mean she said 'no.' (Say aside as if confiding in the audience) What if this deed of the queen should come abroad unto all women, and what if all the women

despise their husbands when they hear this. The men of the kingdom would never forgive me! (loudly) Chaos! Turmoil!  
Anarchy!

**Narrator:** The king's counselors charged that Queen Vashti had not only insulted the king, but also all the princes and people of the kingdom. So, they recommended that a new queen be found to replace Vashti.

**Ahasuerus:** (look regal) So shall it be. I shall marry another beautiful woman. Someone who dwells in my kingdom. Counselors, begin to search for that woman who will be my new wife and queen.

## Act 2

**Narrator:** Now in the palace of Shushan there was a certain Jewish man named Mordecai, a Benjamite who had been carried away from Jerusalem in the Babylonian captivity. And Mordecai raised up Hadassah, his uncle's daughter, who was called . . . Esther! She was very fair and beautiful. There were many women brought to the palace so that Ahasuerus could choose another queen.

**Mordecai:** Now Esther, listen to your old cousin Mordecai, you need to be careful around some of these people. If I were you, I would not let them know that you are a descendent and heir of the promises of Abraham, you know, Jewish.

**Narrator:** So the Scriptures tell us that . . . "the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti."

But in the midst of all this joy, there was treachery and deceit brewing within the kingdom. Two individuals were planning to assassinate the king. Fortunately, Mordecai learned of this evil plot, and told it to Queen Esther, who in turn told it to the king in Mordecai's name. Thus the criminals were caught and hanged on a tree.

We will learn that God allowed this near tragedy to occur ultimately to prevent a much greater tragedy in the kingdom of Ahasuerus.

## Act 3

**Narrator:** For a reason that is not told to us in Scripture, king Ahasuerus brought honor and advancement to a prince named Haman the Agagite above all his other princes. And everyone of the king's servants bowed to Haman and revered him . . . all of the king's servants except . . . Mordecai!

**Haman:** I'm going to get that Mordecai and all his brethren, the Jewish people throughout the kingdom of Ahasuerus. But when . . . when would be the right time to destroy this people. I know, I'll have the king's servants who are loyal to me cast lots before me everyday until we receive the right sign to know when to do away with these people, the Jewish people.

**Narrator:** So Haman had the servants cast lots before him every day beginning in the first month, the month of Nisan (when Passover is celebrated) until the twelfth month, which is the month Adar (which is this month on the Jewish calendar). And Haman determined that he should do this diabolical deed this month in the month of Adar.

**Ahasuerus:** Now Haman, are you saying to me, the king, that there is a people called the Jewish people that are scattered among all the people of my kingdom?

And you are saying that this people does not keep my laws.

And you say that I should allow them to be destroyed.

And you say that ten thousand talents should be paid to those who will do this thing?

Well, fine, but, here, take my ring so that you may carry out these things without hindrance.

**Narrator:** So Haman had a terrible decree written and sealed it with the king's ring. The decree said that (read like an official decree) ALL JEWS, BOTH YOUNG AND OLD, LITTLE CHILDREN AND WOMEN, SHOULD BE DESTROYED, KILLED AND CAUSED TO PERISH IN ONE DAY - ON THE 13TH DAY OF THE 12TH MONTH (THE MONTH OF ADAR) AND THEIR POSSESSIONS TAKEN AWAY. ALL ABLE-BODIED PEOPLE SHOULD BE READY TO ATTACK THE JEWISH PEOPLE ON THAT DAY.

## Act 4

**Narrator:** When Mordecai heard about all these terrible deeds, he rent his clothes and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and cried with a loud and bitter cry.

(**Mordecai** cries aloud) Oy vey! Oy vey! Oy vey!

And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. And Esther sent a messenger unto Mordecai to find out about the dilemma.

**Mordecai:** Listen to me, oh messenger of Queen Esther, go back to her and speak these words "I charge you to go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for your people, that he would spare the lives of the Jewish people." Go quickly messenger to the Queen. Go! Go!

**Esther:** What a message to come from cousin Mordecai! Messenger, go back to him and tell him that everyone knows that a person cannot just speak to the king. For, if anyone, even I, were to come to the king in the inner court, when I have not been called by him, then I could be put to death according to the law of king Ahasuerus.

(exasperated) The only hope that I would have in such a situation would be if the king were to hold out to me the golden scepter, then I would be allowed to live. BUT I HAVE NOT BEEN SUMMONED TO THE KING IN THE LAST THIRTY DAYS. WHAT IF HE DOES NOT WANT TO SEE ME YET?

**Mordecai:** Oh, messenger, return to your queen and tell her these my words: (with a calm but determined voice) THINK NOT WITH THYSELF THAT THOU SHALT ESCAPE IN THE KING'S HOUSE, MORE THAN ALL THE JEWS.

FOR IF THOU ALTOGETHER HOLD THY PEACE AT THIS TIME, THEN SHALL THERE ENLARGEMENT AND DELIVERANCE ARISE TO THE JEW FROM ANOTHER PLACE; BUT THOU AND THY FATHER'S HOUSE SHALL BE DESTROYED: AND WHO KNOWS WHETHER YOU ARE COME TO THE KINGDOM FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS?

**Esther:** (with bold determination and godliness) Messenger, return to Mordecai my cousin, and say to him: Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

## Act 5

**Narrator:** Now it came to pass after three days of fasting, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house. When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. So Esther drew near and touched the top of his scepter.

**Ahasuerus:** To what do I owe this wonderful surprise my queen? Ask of me whatever you would like, and I will even give you your heart's desire, up to half my kingdom if you desire it.

**Esther:** Please, my king, you and Haman (aside to the audience "the enemy of the Jewish people and their God") come, today, to the banquet that I have prepared.

**Narrator:** So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. And the king promised again to give Esther whatever she wanted "even to the half of his kingdom."

**Esther:** My petition and request is, if I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come again to the banquet that I shall prepare for them tomorrow, and I will give my petition tomorrow.

**Narrator:** Haman went home that day joyful and glad in his heart, but again as he passed by Mordecai at the king's gate, Mordecai would not stand up or honour him in any way. So Haman decided to have gallows 75 ft. high made, and he determined to ask the king the next morning that Mordecai be hanged there on.

## Act 6

**Narrator:** That night, strangely enough the king could not sleep, and he commanded that the book of the records of the chronicles be read before him.

And in the reading, Ahasuerus heard and was reminded that Mordecai saved the king's life by revealing a plot against him. Thus the king proclaimed:

**Ahasuerus:** What honor and dignity has been done to Mordecai for this? Nothing? A man saves the king's life and nothing is done for him? This must be rectified immediately. Who is in attendance in my court? Haman? Call him in.

**Narrator:** Now Haman was come to the court of the king to ask that Mordecai be hanged on the gallows that Haman had prepared. But the king spoke to Haman first and said . . .

**Ahasuerus:** What shall be done unto the man whom the king delights to honor?

**Narrator:** Now Haman, thinking to himself, assumed that the king was trying to praise Haman. So Haman responded . . .

**Haman:** For the man that the king delights to honor, let the royal apparel be brought that the king likes to wear, and the horse that the king rides, and the royal crown, and have one of the king's most noble princes bring them to the man that you would like to honour. (excited) and have that man ride on horseback through the street of the city and proclaim before him "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honour!"

**Narrator:** And the king responded . . .

**Ahasuerus:** Haman! Such a delightful idea! Quickly, I call you to go and take the clothing and the horse as you have said, to the man that I wish to honour . . . Mordecai the Jew!

**Narrator:** So Haman was forced to do exactly as the king had said and brought honour to Mordecai the Jew.

But afterwards Mordecai returned to the king's gate, ever concerned about the plight of his people. And Haman returned home, mourning and having his head covered.

When Haman reached home, Zeresh, Haman's wife, and all of Haman's wise men said to Haman . . .

**Zeresh & Wisemen:** (all actors read together) We can see that you have begun to fall before Mordecai. If Mordecai is indeed of the seed of the Jews, you will not prevail against him, but you will surely fall before him.

**Narrator:** Then the king's servants came to Haman's home to bring him to Esther's banquet.

## Act 7

**Narrator:** King Ahasuerus and Haman came to the banquet of Esther the Queen. And the king said again to Esther on the second day of the banquet.

**Ahasuerus:** What is your petition, Queen Esther? And it shall be granted to you. And what is your request? And it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

**Esther:** If I have found favour in your sight, Oh king, and if it please the king let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request

For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish.

**Ahasuerus:** Who is he that has dared and presumed in his heart to do such a thing!

**Esther:** The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!

**Narrator:** Then Haman became exceedingly afraid before the king and the queen.

And the king arose from the banquet table in great wrath and anger and stormed into the palace garden.

Now, so frightened was Haman that he threw himself upon the bed where the queen was reclining so as to beg Esther for his life before the king.

But when the king returned . . . he saw Haman lying upon the queen's bed and exclaimed.

**Ahasuerus:** (loudly) Will he force himself upon the queen even right before my eyes in my own house?

**Narrator:** At these words the king's servants covered Haman's face. And informed the king that there were gallows 75 ft. high which Haman ordered to be made to hang Mordecai the Jew.

**Ahasuerus:** Hang Haman on those very gallows!

### Act 8

**Narrator:** So Haman was hanged on the gallows that he had constructed in his own house in order to kill Mordecai.

And on that day the king gave the house of Haman (the Jews enemy) to Esther the queen. And the king took off his ring which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

And Esther spoke yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and sought with tears that he stop the terrible things that Haman the Agagite had determined to do to the Jewish people.

**Esther:** If it please the king and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the commandments devised by Haman to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces

For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?

**Ahasuerus:** Behold, I the king, grant that you and your cousin Mordecai may write letters in the king's name and seal it with my royal seal. For if anything is written in my name and sealed with my seal, it cannot be reversed.

**Narrator:** So Mordecai commanded unto the Jews and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces, from India unto Ethiopia, a hundred twenty-seven provinces and to every people in their language the following letter in the king's name and with the king's seal. THE KING GRANTS THE JEWS WHICH ARE IN EVERY CITY TO GATHER THEMSELVES TOGETHER, AND TO STAND FOR THEIR LIVES, TO DESTROY AND TO SLAY AND TO CAUSE TO PERISH, ALL THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PROVINCE THAT WOULD TRY TO ASSAULT THEM, BOTH LITTLE CHILDREN AND WOMEN, AND TO TAKE THEIR POSSESSIONS FROM THEM FOR BOOTY.

ALL THIS MAY HAPPEN ON ONE DAY, NAMELY THE 13TH DAY OF THE 12TH MONTH IN THE MONTH OF ADAR. THE JEWS SHOULD BE READY ON THAT DAY TO AVENGE THEMSELVES AGAINST THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE OPPRESSED AND KILLED THEM.

And when these commands came into the provinces the Jews had light and gladness, and joy and honour, and a feast. AND MANY OF THE PEOPLE OF THE LANDS BECAME JEWS FOR FEAR OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THEIR ENEMIES.

### Act 9

**Narrator:** Now in the 12th month, the month Adar (this month), on the 13th day when the day of the decree was drawing near, the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus.

And all the rulers of the provinces helped the Jews because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them because Mordecai became greater and greater in the king's house and his fame went into all the provinces.

And the Jews smote all of their enemies who had sought to destroy them. And the king said to Esther . . .

**Ahasuerus:** The Jews have slain and destroyed 500 men in Shushan the palace.

But what about the ten sons of Haman? And what about the rest of my provinces? Now what is thy petition? And it shall be granted thee? What is thy further request and it shall be done.

**Esther:** If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do tomorrow also according as unto this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.

**Narrator:** And the king commanded that it be done. So the ten sons of Haman were hanged on his gallows.

Now the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the 14th day of Adar and slew 300 men at Shushan, but they did not take their possessions for booty.

But the other Jews that were in the provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes 75,000, but they also did not take their possessions as booty.

On the 13th and 14th day of Adar they rested and made a feast day of gladness. Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwalled towns, made the 14th day a day of gladness and feasting, a good day and a day of sending portions to one another.

And Mordecai wrote letters commanding that all the Jews establish among themselves that they keep the 14th day of Adar and the 15th day as feast days yearly. For it was a month that was turned to the Jews from sorrow to joy and from mourning into a good day, a day of feasting and sending portions and giving gifts to the poor.

These days are called Purim because Haman cast the Pur (that is lots) to destroy the Jews.

But this day was not ordained as a feast for the Jews only, for as it says in the Holy Scriptures, this feast day was ordained for all the Jews and for all people who joined themselves to them, for Jewish and Gentile people who loved God's people.

And so King Ahasuerus declared the greatness of Mordecai, for Mordecai the Jew was second only to the king himself, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking SHALOM (peace) to all his seed.