

An Enemy Destroyed

Key Verse: *“The king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.”*
—Esther 7:2

Selected Scripture:
Esther 7:1-10

Our Key Verse depicts the king’s pleasure in attending a banquet Esther arranged for him and his subsequent offer to fulfill any request she might desire as an acknowledgment of his appreciation of her hospitality.

“Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O 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. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king’s damage.”—Esther 7:3,4

THIS LESSON DESCRIBES the struggles of Jewish exiles in Persia during the reign of King Ahasuerus. Under divine providence and through a unique set of circumstances, Esther, a Jewish maiden, became queen. Subsequently she was used as the instrument of deliverance from the murderous designs of Haman, who plotted to have her people exterminated, even though at the time he did not know of her ancestry.

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In response to the king's inquiry as to who would dare commit such an act upon her people, Esther exposed the truth about Haman in that he was not a faithful servant but was more interested in his fame and status. While Ahasuerus arose in anger and stepped into the palace garden to reflect upon the matter, Haman fell to the foot of the couch which Esther used for the banquet and began to plead for his life. As the king returned and viewed the scene, in his wrath he ordered Haman to be hanged.—vss. 5-10

One important lesson from this narrative is that of having faith in God. As members of the house of servants, the situation of Israel would turn out favorably later through God's overruling providences. (Heb. 3:5) The Jewish people who were spared from extermination on this occasion, despite great adversity in their lives down through the ages, have been preserved by God as a people. They have not been destroyed, as was the plan of Haman.

Devoted followers of Christ are identified as members of the house of sons. (vs. 6) No matter what difficulties we may experience in life, they serve the purpose of testing our faith—"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 1:7) The Scriptures affirm that if we are obedient to the Heavenly Father's principles, we can be assured that the outcome will be glorious. As noted in this precious promise, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 8:35,38,39 ■