

God Saves His People Through a Queen

Summary and Goal

The Book of Esther is a story full of truth and beauty. In it we see the nature and necessity of risk regarding salvation. We see the tension between our timing and the timeliness of God. We also see a multifaceted picture of salvation as God works out His plans through human actions. Yet one of the most simple and profound beauties of this book is that the hero is Esther, a woman, without whom, it seems, the promises of God would have been cut off. We can learn much from the nuances of her story, but what rises to the surface is the truth that God brings salvation to His people through an intercessor, a signpost to a greater story and display of this truth: Jesus and the gospel.

Session Outline

1. The salvation of God's people comes with great risk (Esth. 4:6-11).
2. The salvation of God's people comes at the right time (Esth. 4:12-16).
3. The salvation of God's people comes in fullness (Esth. 7:3-6,10-8:2).

Background Passage: Esther

Session in a Sentence

God brings salvation to His people through an intercessor.

Christ Connection

The command to kill all the Jews threatened the fulfillment of God's promise of a Messiah King who would bring the blessing given to Abraham to the world. God brought salvation to His people through Esther, who interceded for them at great risk to her own life. God would provide a greater salvation—from sin and death—through Jesus, who interceded for us and laid down His life on our behalf.

Missional Application

Because Christ interceded on our behalf, we recognize that God has placed us where we are in this time to share the gospel with others so they may be saved, even if it comes at great risk to us.

Date of My Bible Study: _____

Group Time

GROUP MEMBER CONTENT

Group content found in the Daily Discipleship Guide is included in this shaded area throughout the session.

Introduction

EXPLAIN: Share the writer's assessment on page 94 in the DDG about the intimacy of family road trips in order to establish the significance of going on a journey with others.

The family road trip is an experience. There's something about the intimacy of journeying together that is beautiful and powerful enough to help parents endure endless "are-we-there-yets" and off-schedule bathroom breaks. Additionally, there's something exhilarating about waking everyone up from their monotony-induced slumber for the last stretch of the drive. Even though the driver has been subjected to a combo of backseat driving, expressions of frustration regarding the route, and some rough highways, it's worth it. The intimacy the journey creates and the arrival at the planned destination allows people to endure and enjoy any of the road trip's potential inconveniences.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



What has been your most memorable and enjoyable road trip? What made it so? *(be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)*

SAY: God desires to journey with His people in life, and as with the family road trip, this road of salvation from justification through sanctification is not absent of trials. It's a road that easily could leave the human heart questioning the goodness of God's heart and the power of God's hand. But this journey with Christ creates an intimacy with God that we would not know otherwise, and we can endure it with joy as we wait eagerly for the fullness of our redemption in eternity.

SUMMARIZE: The Book of Esther relates a tough journey with God that is full of truth and beauty. In this story we see the nature and necessity of risk regarding salvation. We see the tension between our timing and the timeliness of God. We also see a multifaceted picture of salvation as God works out His plans through human actions. Yet one of the most simple and profound beauties of this book is that the hero is Esther, a woman, without whom, it seems, the promises of God would have been cut off. We can learn much from the nuances of her story, but what rises to the surface is the truth that God brings salvation to His people through an intercessor, a signpost to a greater story and display of this truth: Jesus and the gospel.

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Point 1: The salvation of God's people comes with great risk (Esth. 4:6-11).

EXPLAIN: Briefly give some background about Esther and Mordecai and the crisis situation that emerged for the Jews during Esther's time as queen to King Ahasuerus of Persia.

- During the reign of Cyrus, the Jews were allowed to return to their homeland, but not everyone did so. Around fifty years later, Mordecai and his niece, Hadassah, or Esther, were living in the capital city of Susa, deep in the Persian Empire. Through some providential circumstances, King Ahasuerus took Esther as his new queen, and for her safety, it remained hidden that she was a Jew (Esth. 1–2).
- That safety, however, was short-lived. Haman, the king's right-hand man, was on a mission of mass genocide against the Jews because his ego had been bruised: Mordecai, a Jew, had refused to bow or pay homage to him according to the king's command (Esth. 3). Upon hearing of Haman's plan for the extermination of the Jews, which had been sanctioned by the king, Mordecai wept and mourned in the streets at the King's Gate (Esth. 4:1-3). He needed to grab Esther's attention to propose a plan for their salvation. Once she noticed Mordecai, Esther sent Hathach, an attendant, to find out what was wrong.

READ Esther 4:6-11 (DDG p. 95).

⁶ Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, ⁷ and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸ Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people. ⁹ And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. ¹⁰ Then Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to go to Mordecai and say, ¹¹ "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days."

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 95) to highlight the level of risk involved for Esther in going to the king about this matter. Make note of how this risk also was a great opportunity for her to exercise faith.

When Esther received Mordecai's plan, she immediately realized the risk that she now faced. No other Jew had her access or relationship to the king, so she seemed to be the best candidate to secure the Jews' survival. However, the king was not aware that she was a Jew, so she likely would expose herself as one. Furthermore, to enter into the presence of the king without an invitation was to invite death upon yourself. Certainly Esther felt fear and apprehension about the risks she faced, but those same risks also provided her with a great opportunity to act in faith.

SAY: Risk invites great discomfort as well as great faith. For Esther, the pathway to her people's rescue ran directly through her risk. That's God's standard operating procedure. The salvation of God's people comes with great risk and through great faith. The greater the salvation, the greater the risk.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



Why are people so risk-averse when it comes to discomfort in their lives? (we don't like pain and want to avoid it if we can; we don't like uncertainty; our culture shapes us to expect comfort everywhere we go)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 95) to emphasize the extent to which Esther was willing to sacrifice in order to identify with her people while death hung over their heads.

Esther was being asked, even called, to take a courageous risk and receive a better comfort than the palace could offer, one that would come from entrusting herself into God's hands. Her risk would be noble and beautiful because it wasn't only for her own sake but the sake of her people. She would be willing to forgo the comfort of the palace and her privilege to identify with her people while death hung over their heads.

- It would have been easy for Esther to take comfort in her safety in the palace. Who would want to risk such luxurious comfort for anything, let alone something that could lead to death? The pull toward comfort is amplified in the face of great risk, but the power and work of God can help us overcome any such pull toward comfort and give us the ability to step faithfully into desperate situations regardless of the potential consequences.
 - Esther's example would be a shadow of King Jesus:
 - A shadow of the King who would forego the comfort of heaven to be functionally homeless.
 - A shadow of the King who would identify with a people living under an even greater death.
 - A shadow of the King who would forgo the praises of His court for the screams of "Crucify Him!"
 - A shadow of the King who would lay down and leverage His privilege so others could have eternal life.
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INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



What are some reasons people are willing to endure personal discomfort? (for the benefit of family and friends; if the end result of the temporary discomfort is a greater sense of health, comfort, and peace; if the discomfort is associated with a greater purpose and mission for the blessing of humanity)

Point 2: The salvation of God's people comes at the right time (Esth. 4:12-16).

READ: Ask a volunteer to read Esther 4:12-16 (DDG p. 96).

¹² And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. ¹³ Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴ For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" ¹⁵ Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, ¹⁶ "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish."

EXPLAIN: Reference the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 96) as you explain God's **wisdom**, **rule**, and **care** evident in the situations Mordecai and Esther found themselves in.

With the Jews facing extermination, Mordecai saw Esther's position as potentially the wise and timely hand of God at work for the salvation of the Jewish people (4:14). The outworking of the hand of God in the present often looks like happenstance, but in hindsight we see His **wisdom**, **rule**, and **care**. God was working through situations and people to create the perfect moment of salvation for His people.

Context: Mordecai and Esther seemed to find themselves in the right places at the right times, and what seemed like happenstance on the surface was actually the hand of God. Beautiful Esther came of age at the time when the king of Persia was looking for a new queen, and he found one in Esther, whom he loved (Esth. 2:1-18). Dutiful Mordecai happened to overhear a plot to assassinate the king. Through Esther, he was able to warn the king and thwart their plans. His actions were noted, but they weren't honored, yet (2:19-23).

- Notice the **wisdom**: God arranged for Mordecai to be honored for saving the king at a time and in a way that dealt a crushing blow to wicked Haman's pride and plan, all part of God's masterful rescue (6:1-14).
- Notice the **rule**: God was actively working through His people. Mordecai affirmed his faith in God's rule when he declared the certainty of deliverance for the Jewish people, whether or not Esther acted (4:13-14).
- Notice the **care**: Esther called for a fast so the Jews could seek the face of God for the favor of God (4:16). Even in exile and under oppression for their sins, the people collectively cried out in hope that the God who sees, hears, and cares would rescue them, and He did.

SAY: God indeed was working for such a time as this in Esther's life, foreshadowing what would occur in the future. In the fullness of time, God sent His Son, Jesus, and at the right time, Jesus died for the ungodly so they might experience the **wisdom**, **rule**, and **care** of the Creator and Savior of the world (see Rom. 5:6; Gal. 4:4).

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



How have you seen God's wisdom, rule, and care displayed in the circumstances of your life? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 96).

God's Plan and Human Action: In ways we are unable to comprehend fully, the Lord's plan goes forward through the **choices** of human beings as moral agents. Knowing that God is **working** all things for the good of those who love Him, we trust in His **promise** to fulfill His plan, even when we do not understand our present circumstances.

Essential Doctrine “God’s Plan and Human Action”: God’s sovereignty over all of life encompasses the free actions of human beings. Proverbs 19:21 says, “Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.” In ways we are unable to comprehend fully, the Lord’s plan goes forward through the **choices** of human beings as moral agents. Even freely chosen sinful actions are factored into God’s overarching plan, as is the case with the crucifixion of Jesus—an event both purposed by God through foreknowledge and yet also carried out by the wicked decisions of human beings (Acts 2:23). Knowing that God is **working** all things for the good of those who love Him (Rom. 8:28), we trust in His **promise** to fulfill His plan, even when we do not understand our present circumstances.

PACK ITEM 12: NO PANIC IN HEAVEN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 96) to explain the significance of Esther’s call for a fast. Emphasize the reason for faith with the **Corrie ten Boom quote** on the poster.

Esther determined to go to the king, but she waited for three days to seek God’s face through a fast. Often when we think of fasting, we lock in on what we’re abstaining from but not what, or who, we’re chasing after. At every passing meal time, Esther and the people were reminded that it is God, not bread, who sustains life, so they were compelled to ask Him to sustain theirs through a miraculous rescue. This is a picture of what waiting well looks like.

- For three days the Jews would wait on the Lord while simultaneously confronting the thoughts of their hearts: “Will God be gracious? Should we come up with another plan?” For three days they exercised faith that God would protect His people and His plan through the courageous act of Esther.
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Point 3: The salvation of God’s people comes in fullness (Esth. 7:3-6,10–8:2).

READ Esther 7:3-6,10–8:2 (DDG p. 97).

^{7:3} Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request. ⁴ For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king.” ⁵ Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?” ⁶ And Esther said, “A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!” Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

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^{7:10} And the king said, “Hang him on that.” So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated.

^{8:1} On that day King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her. ² And the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 97) to show how God displayed His grace through the king’s gracious response to Esther, Mordecai, and the Jews.

The conclusion of Esther’s story is filled with abundant grace. The pagan king of Persia responded graciously to Esther’s unbidden approach and her requests. He punished Haman, the enemy of the Jews, and promoted Esther and Mordecai (Esth. 5; 7–8). He also paved the way for Esther and Mordecai to protect their people. With the king’s signet ring, Mordecai turned the tables on the Jews’ enemies, giving the Jews the freedom to defend themselves, and they destroyed their attackers (Esth. 8–9).

- Neither Esther nor Mordecai asked for the riches they received, but the king saw fit within his power and generosity to pour out grace upon them, which was actually God working in the shadows of this pagan king’s heart. These abundant blessings extended past this moment and continued for the rest of their lives and for the benefit of countless others (Esth. 10).
- Similarly, God blesses us way beyond the bare minimum in the gospel. At the cross of Christ, Jesus emptied sin and death of its power. But He didn’t just pay our debt, He gives us new and eternal life (Rom. 6:4). By faith in Him, we receive a tremendous outpouring of grace for all of our lives and for the benefit of countless others as we share this good news.

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 97) to highlight God’s providence in granting Esther favor with King Ahasuerus.

Numerous times Esther appealed to King Ahasuerus for his favor (Esth. 5:4,8; 7:3; 8:5; 9:13). Her hope on these occasions was that the king was still pleased with her and would respond accordingly. But he was also an impulsive man, having dismissed his former queen and second-in-command in the blink of an eye. Thankfully, God directed the king’s heart to honor Esther and Mordecai for their faithfulness (Prov. 21:1).



Voices from Church History

“God is ... sovereign in power, sovereign in wisdom, sovereign in love. He is too wise to be mistaken, too good to be unkind.”¹

—Daniel Wilson (1778-1858)

Application: Could you imagine if the God of the Scriptures were like Ahasuerus, someone who needed to be bartered with or manipulated to be gracious? Imagine if He were impulsive, emotionally unstable, and void of restraint. Then thank the Lord that He is not this way. The king of Persia was a direct foil to the King of kings. God doesn’t require us to beg for grace; He’s postured and pleased to give it to all who come to Him in repentance and through faith in Jesus. God is not manipulated and cannot be bartered with because He’s free from all the concerns and desires that draw human beings; plus, what do we have to offer Him? Furthermore, He’s not a miser who has to be convinced to do good; He’s a father who delights in being generous to His children. Such is the unmerited favor and abundant grace of our great God.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



What are some ways God’s grace exceeds expectations in this world? (intuitively, we all know what we deserve for our sin—death and hell—yet by God’s grace, believers in Christ are granted eternal life in heaven with Him; the world operates on a system of earned rewards and punishments, but God upends that with His grace, granting blessing far beyond what we could ever earn or deserve; even if someone should choose to show grace to another, they can only do so with the limited resources that they have, but God has unlimited resources and infinite grace to bestow on His children)

My Mission

EXPLAIN: Though her story sounds like a fairy tale, we must resist the urge to put Esther in some fantastical world, removing her from reality. She was a minority woman from an oppressed people in a foreign place facing real danger. Yet she helped to deliver her people from death, and her story was recorded as a God-breathed book in the Scriptures. And in a grander way, she stands in the shadow of the cross pointing to an even better rescuer—Jesus. At the pleasure of her king, Esther survived; at the pleasure of His Father, Jesus was crushed for our sake (Isa. 53:10-12). Esther risked her life for her people; Jesus laid His life down for the salvation of sinners. In the fullness of time, great grace was shown to us in Christ. Will you believe in Him? Will you celebrate and praise Him? Will you share Him with others, even if that comes with great risk?

READ the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 98), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

Because Christ interceded on our behalf, we recognize that God has placed us where we are in this time to share the gospel with others so they may be saved, even if it comes at great risk to us.

- **In what areas of your life will you seek God for answers, strength, and faith?**
- **In what ways can your group inconvenience yourselves to intercede on behalf of others?**
- **How will you lay down your personal comfort for the sake of someone else in your life knowing Jesus?**



Voices from Church History

“Insistence on security is incompatible with the way of the cross. What daring adventures the incarnation and the atonement were! What a breach of convention and decorum that Almighty God should renounce his privileges in order to take human flesh and bear human sin! Jesus had no security except in his Father. So to follow Jesus is always to accept at least a measure of uncertainty, danger and rejection for his sake.”²

—John Stott (1921-2011)

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Father, You always provide what Your people need. As with Esther, who risked her life to act as an intercessor for Your people, so also in a greater way, Jesus gave up His life to serve as our intercessor. Thank You for raising Your Son from the dead so that He might forever represent us in Your presence. Strengthen us by the Holy Spirit to take risks for the gospel for such a time as this. Amen.

INSTRUCT: As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the **Daily Study** devotions in their DDG (pp. 99-101), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use **Encourage One Another** (p. 102) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.

Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The **Daily Study** devotions in the DDG (pp. 99-101) will help group members get into God's Word and study it for themselves. **Encourage One Another** (p. 102) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 99-101) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for **Day 4** as a part of point 3 in the session: **Although He is not mentioned directly in the Book of Esther, God was at work placing Mordecai and Esther in positions of influence to intercede for their people and spare them from death.**



Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God's Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- **Day 1:** "Patience is a gift no one seems to want but God is eager to give. Patience is rooted in the reality that while we are limited, God is not."
- **Day 5:** "God's peace is granted to those with an active intentional resolve to depend on Him, not those with a passive circumstantial resignation."



Visit www.GospelProject.com/Blog for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God's Word.

Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member's DDG (p. 102) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using *The Gospel Project* in their groups.

- **Encourage group members to help one another estimate their own willingness to take risks for the gospel and where there might be opportunities to do so.**
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.

Additional Commentary

Point 1: The salvation of God's people comes with great risk (Esth. 4:6-11).

“Although apparently separated from direct contact with Mordecai during the first five years of her marriage to Xerxes, Esther remains concerned for him. His distress distresses her, and she sends clothing to him to replace his sackcloth. However, it is only when he refuses to accept her gift that she attempts to find out what is actually troubling her cousin. When Esther's attending eunuch, Hathach, however, brings Mordecai's entreaty that she go to the king to plead for 'her' people, she begs off, explaining that she no longer routinely sees the king. Moreover, as Mordecai well knows, she cannot go to the king uninvited without risking her life, for unless Xerxes extends his golden scepter, her life will be taken on the spot.”³

“Esther's response to Mordecai through Hathach was to remind him that to come to the king unbidden was certain **death**. Such a law was understandable in the Persian Empire with its long history of political assassinations (in fact Ahasuerus was murdered in his own bed less than ten years later). The one exception to this rule was if the king allowed an uninvited person to approach him, signified by his extending **the gold scepter**. Some assume that Esther's statement in v. 11 indicated that her absence from her husband was because she had fallen out of favor with him or that his passion for her had waned. Thus, the king might be less likely to respond to her unexpected presence and request. On the other hand, possibly her purpose was only to tell Mordecai that in the normal routine she did not see the king often, and this request would require her to make an unscheduled—and dangerous—visit.”⁴

Point 2: The salvation of God's people comes at the right time (Esth. 4:12-16).

“Mordecai encourages Esther that now, in the time of the Jews' need, 'who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' By his own merciful initiative, God delights to raise up deliverers for his people when they need him most (1 Cor. 1:27-28). We think especially here of the judges and then the kings down through Israel's history, who frequently deliver God's people, yet just as frequently are themselves corrupt. And all of them, eventually, die. The King who never dies is Jesus himself, who, like Esther, was raised up at just the right moment in history (Rom. 5:6; Gal. 4:4), 'for such a time as this'—or as Paul elsewhere says, 'when the fullness of time had come' (Gal. 4:4).”⁵

“In the Persian court of Esther’s day, an unauthorized person attempting to approach the king would be killed unless the king granted a special dispensation. In the case of Esther, King Xerxes granted such a dispensation, signified by the custom of extending to her his gold scepter. Esther was bold and touched the scepter. Not only was the king willing to hear Esther’s request, he even offered her up to half his kingdom—a phrase which revealed his generosity toward his queen (Esth. 5:2-3).”⁶

Point 3: The salvation of God’s people comes in fullness (Esth. 7:3-6,10–8:2).

“Persian law required evidence of two offences if an official was to be executed without a trial. The king had evidence of Haman’s crime against him as a husband and against him as king, and did not hesitate to order that Haman be impaled (7:10). Haman’s evil scheme to annihilate the Jews was resolved by the promotion of Mordecai to the place of Haman, the issuance of a counter-edict, and the implementation of the edict in an appropriate manner. The king had already acknowledged Mordecai’s loyalty by honouring him in the way suggested by Haman (6:7-9). Now he came *into the presence of the king* as a relative of his queen and a trusted official (8:1). He was now in the same position as those who were described in 1:14 as ‘closest to the king.’ He was promoted to the position that Haman had held and given the signet ring that symbolised the king’s trust in him (8:2). Ironically, Haman’s attempt to destroy Mordecai for not acknowledging his status had led to Mordecai being given that status. Once again the God of Israel is at work behind the scenes.”⁷

“The reversals and irony continue as **one of the royal eunuchs** informed the king about the gallows Haman **made for Mordecai**, which must have intensified the king’s anger since **Harbona** also included the connection of Mordecai as the one **who gave the report that saved the king**. A timely reminder that Haman knowingly planned the execution of the man who had saved the king’s life sealed the fate of the Agagite, another example of poetic justice (cp. Prov. 11:6; 29:16). Since Persian law allowed the state to take the property and possessions of condemned criminals, Ahasuerus had control over Haman’s vast estate. He immediately gave it to Esther. Ahasuerus further honored Mordecai by giving him the **signet ring**, elevating him officially to the position Haman had held with the right to act in the name of the king (cp. 3:10). Esther also **put him [Mordecai] in charge of Haman’s estate**.”⁸

References

1. D. Wilson, “Obituary: The Rev. Basil Woodd,” in *The Christian Observer*, vol. 31 (London: J. Hatchard and Son, Piccadilly, 1831), 312.
2. John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 281.
3. Karen H. Jobes, *Esther*, in *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015) [Wordsearch].
4. Carl R. Anderson, “Esther,” in *CSB Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 753, n. 4:10-12.
5. Elyse Fitzpatrick, “Esther,” in *Gospel Transformation Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 605, n. 4:14.
6. Martha S. Bergen, “When Approaching the King of Persia,” *Biblical Illustrator* (Spring 2018): 50.
7. David Clarence, “Esther,” in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 576.
8. Katie McCoy, “Esther,” in *The Study Bible for Women* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2014), 614, n. 7:9; 8:1-2.