NOV

8

ESTHER SAVED HER PEOPLE

Esther

King Ahasuerus (uh haz yoo EHR uhs) was the king of Persia. Many years earlier, when Cyrus was king, he sent some of God's people back to Judah to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. So, some of God's people went to Judah, but some of them stayed in Persia. God's people were called Jews because they were from Judah.

Esther was one of God's people who had not gone to Jerusalem. Esther was very beautiful, and she **was brought to King Ahasuerus because he was looking for a woman to be his queen. The king liked Esther very much, and she became queen.** They had a great feast for her. **But Esther didn't tell anyone she was a Jew.**

An evil man named Haman was a leader in the kingdom, and King Ahasuerus honored Haman to a higher position. **Everyone was supposed to bow down to Haman, but Mordecai, the person who had raised Esther, would not bow down. This made Haman extremely angry. When Haman found out that Mordecai was a Jew, Haman planned to have all the Jews put to death.**

Mordecai sent word to Esther and asked her to go to the king and beg him to save her people. Esther said to him, "Everyone knows that you can't just go talk to the king. **There is a law that if you go to him without him calling you, you will be put to death unless he chooses to raise his gold scepter."**

Mordecai replied, "If you choose to keep silent, God will save his people another way. But **who knows, maybe you were made queen for this reason!"** Esther asked Mordecai to gather all the Jews together to pray and fast for her for three days.

On the third day, **Esther approached the king, and he extended the gold scepter toward her. He said, "What is it, Queen Esther?** I will give you anything you wish!" **She invited the king and Haman to a banquet that day.** The king accepted the invitation.

While they were dining, the king said again, "What do you want, Queen Esther? I'll give you anything, even up to half the kingdom!" Queen Esther said, "What I want is for you and Haman to come to another banquet tomorrow!" The king agreed.

At that second feast, the king asked Esther a third time: "Queen Esther, what can I do for you? I'll give you anything you desire." **Queen Esther said, "My request, O king, is that you spare my life, and the lives of my people, for this evil Haman has sentenced us to death."**

The king was very angry with Haman and sentenced him to die. Once more, **Esther went before the king on behalf of her people and asked him to sign a law protecting her people from their enemies.** The king signed the law, and the Jews celebrated with joy.