

**Esther 7:1-6,9-10; 9:20-22**

**Right person, right place, right time**

Esther, a young Jewish woman who has become queen, has learnt of a plot by her husband's adviser, Haman, to wreak revenge by murdering her people. Risking her life, she courageously stands up for herself and her fellow Jews. Haman is duly punished. The feast of Purim is established as an annual celebration of this deliverance.



**Bible notes**



The Book of Esther is part of the group of texts known as the Writings, the third major group of texts in the Old Testament along with the Law and the Prophets. Five of the writings – Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations and Esther – were grouped together as each of them was used at one or other of the major Jewish festivals or anniversaries. The story of Esther is celebrated at Purim as a reminder of God's power to save and that good overcomes evil. The book is set in Susa, the winter residence of the Persian king and takes place in the post-exilic period when the Jewish people were scattered across the Persian Empire. The narrative tells of Haman (a senior political adviser to King Ahasuerus) who, as a result of his grudge against Mordecai (Esther's uncle), was plotting the extinction of all the Jewish people in Persia (which would have been virtually all of the Jewish population). In such a crisis one commentator suggests 'providential intervention was to be expected' and it came through Esther, a Jewish girl who had been chosen to be queen. It is a classic example of the right person at the right place at the right time. It is often pointed out that God is not mentioned in Esther but there is also an apocryphal book (included in some Bibles) of Additions to Esther in which there are many references including prayers from Esther and Mordecai to God. Esther is presented as an exemplar of courage. Even though she was a queen, had Ahasuerus not taken kindly to what she said he himself could have disposed of her. Alongside the themes of providence and courage there are also interesting questions about justice. JG Baldwin suggests 'The author found satisfaction in this outworking of justice, which well illustrates Psalm 9:16b, 'The wicked are snared in the work of their hands'.

**REFLECT**



Reflect on the risk Esther took, challenging the king while admitting to being a Jew. What response do we receive today if we profess our faith? Should we take that risk and why? Are there people or places you know of where people are persecuted for their faith? Could you pray, write letters or advocate for their protection?

**First impressions**

- Have you ever been the right person in the right place at the right time?
- Is God calling you to speak up about a particular issue?
- How can you help others to find their calling?



**EXPLORE**



Purim is a Jewish festival that celebrates Esther saving the Jewish people. Find out more about Purim and how it is celebrated.

**A sending out prayer**

May we listen for God's call,  
know his strength,  
see where he is leading us,  
be faithful in doing his work  
and make way for his kingdom. Amen.



**LISTEN**

Reading the Book of Esther takes less than an hour. Try reading it in one go or find an audiobook version. What do you learn about Esther when you hear all of her story?

**WATCH**



Watch the trailer for *Incredibles 2* where each member of the family finds themselves being the right person or in the right place. Pray, asking God to use your unique gifts and in your unique setting today.