

# Journey Through The Bible: The Book of Esther

**“For Such a Time As This”**

**Bible reading: Esther 3:1-4:1 ( page 355)**

# The Book of Esther

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- Describes the most serious threat to the existence of the Jewish people not equalled until the Nazi holocaust in the 1940's.
- The book is unique because it never mentions or refers to God.



# The Book of Esther

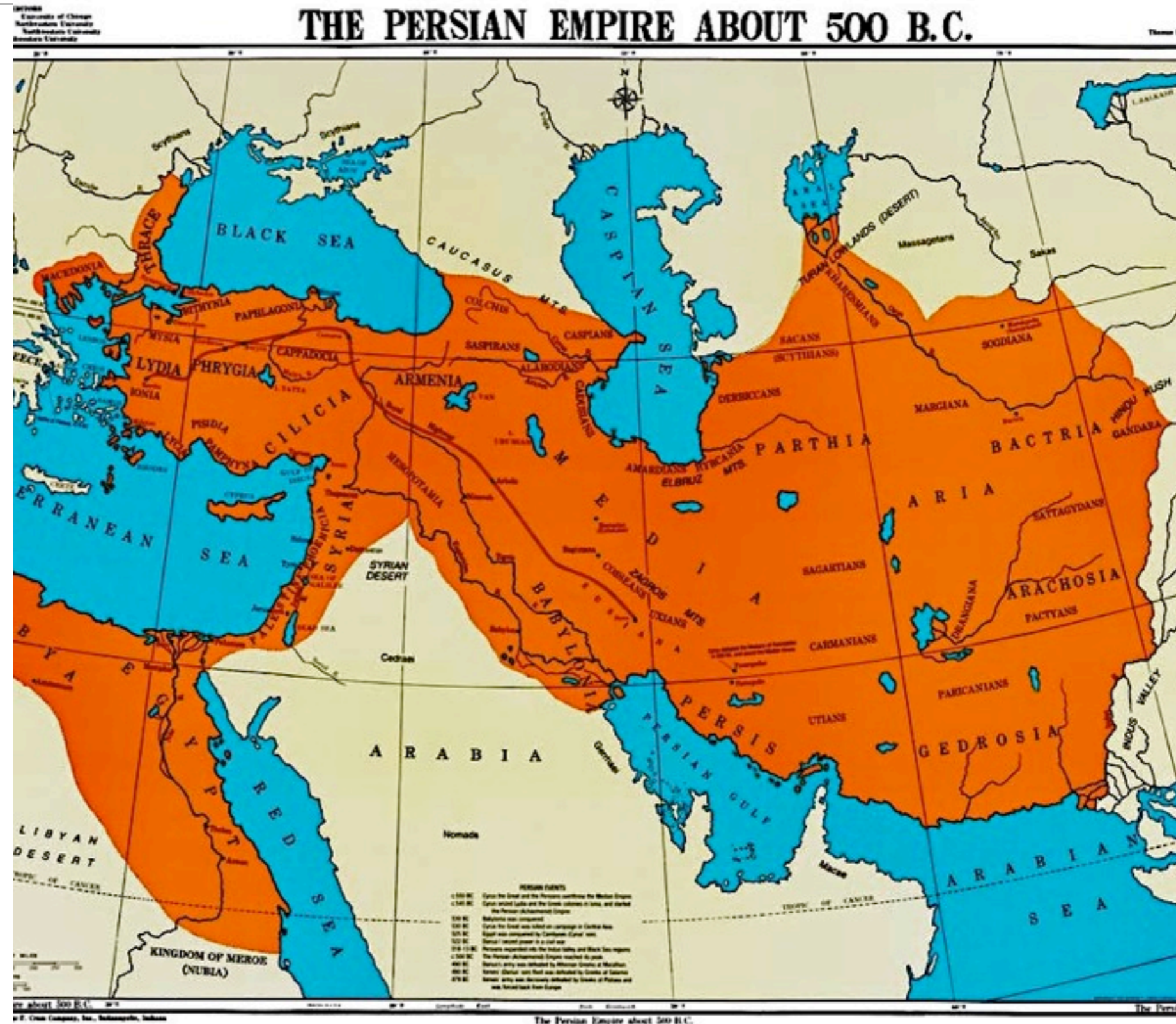
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- The book is like a parable of our lives.
- We don't experience dramatic miracles most of the time.
- So called coincidents (chance happenings) are the finger print of God's activity in the background.



# The Book of Esther

- The story takes place in Susa the capital of the Persian Empire.
- King Xerxes ruled 486 - 465 BC (21 years).
- His rule falls between the the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.



# The Book of Esther

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- The Jews in all this Empire were sentenced to death.
- The book describes the Edict that went out under the king's name to exterminate all Jews and seize their property.
- This was very similar to the Nazi holocaust legislation during World War 2 in Europe.



# The Edict of Death

- “Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all Haman’s orders to the king’s satraps, the governors of the various provinces and the nobles of the various peoples. These were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring. Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews— young and old, women and little children— on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. (Esther 3:12–14, NIV84)



# The Edict of Death

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- “When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged. Yet having learned who Mordecai’s people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai’s people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.”  
(Esther 3:5–6, NIV84)



# Mordecai The Jew

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- Why did Mordecai disobey the order to bow down and worship Haman?
- Mordecai was a faithful Jew and would not break the second commandment, “You shall not bow down or worship [anything that is not God].”





# Haman the Amalekite

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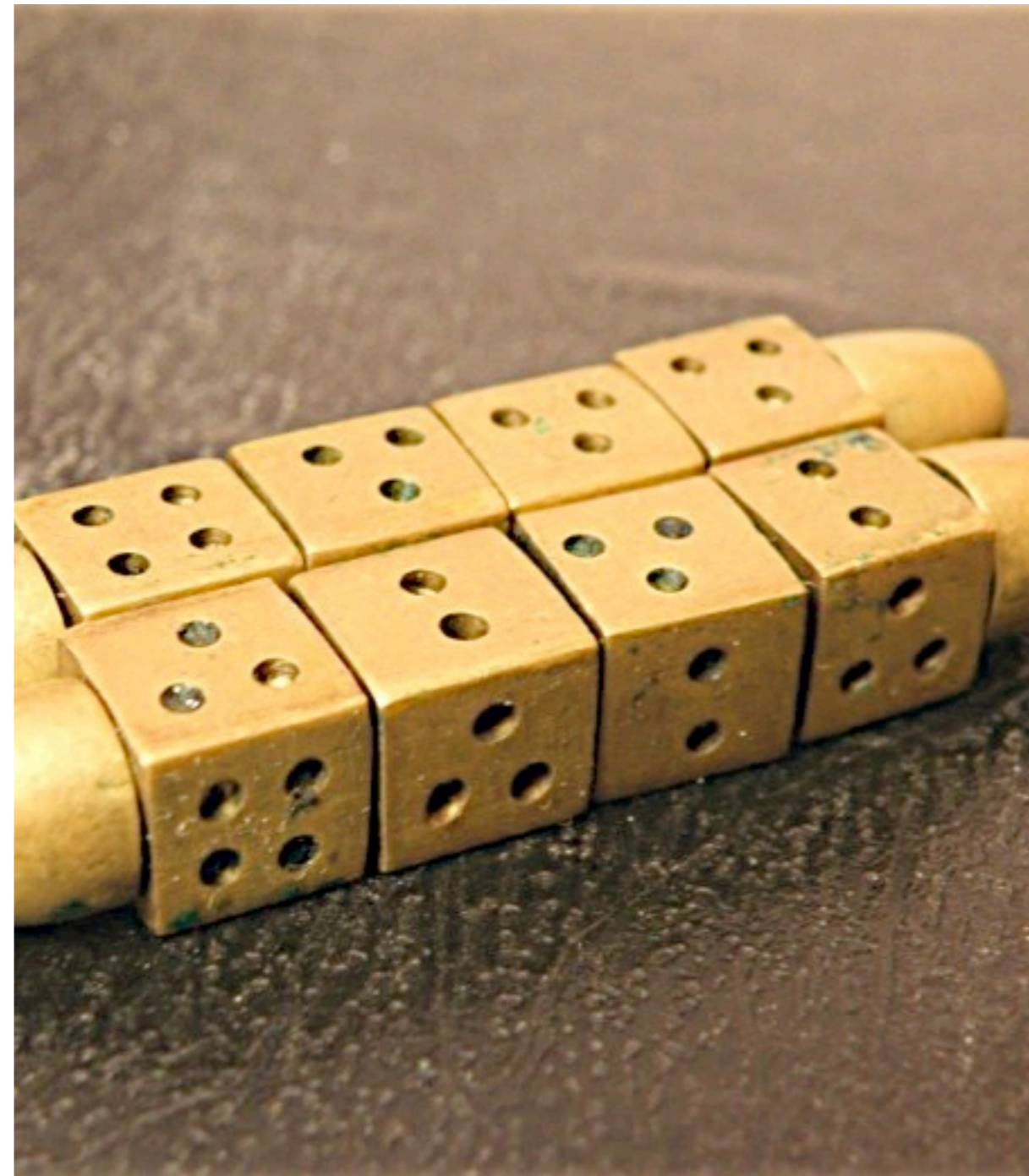
- Why did Haman plan such an extreme revenge? Why not just execute Mordecai?
- The motive was racial hatred. Haman was an Amalekite.
  - Amalekites had attacked Israel as they fled from Egypt.
  - They had waged war against the people of Israel for 400 years.
  - God had commanded Saul to destroy the Amalekites.



# Haman invokes Occult Powers

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- Haman consulted astrologers and magicians to select the day on which all Jews were to be destroyed.
- The Lot fell on the 13th day of the 12th month.
- To gain permission from the king, Haman accused the Jewish people of being disloyal to the king.
- Haman offered to personally pay for the cost of killing them: 10,000 talents of silver - a huge sum.



# Where was God?

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- God's plan of salvation depended on the Jewish people.
- God's plan was for a Saviour - the Messiah - to die as sacrifice for all sin, and so restore fellowship with God and eternal life.
- God had chosen Abraham's descendants to be the people from which the Messiah would come.
- Haman's plan threatened God's plan of salvation.



# Where was God?

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- Why didn't God just kill Haman?
  - The edict had already gone out and couldn't be changed.
- Why didn't God stop Haman before the command went out?
  - The seeds of Haman's destruction had already been sown even before Haman had been promoted.



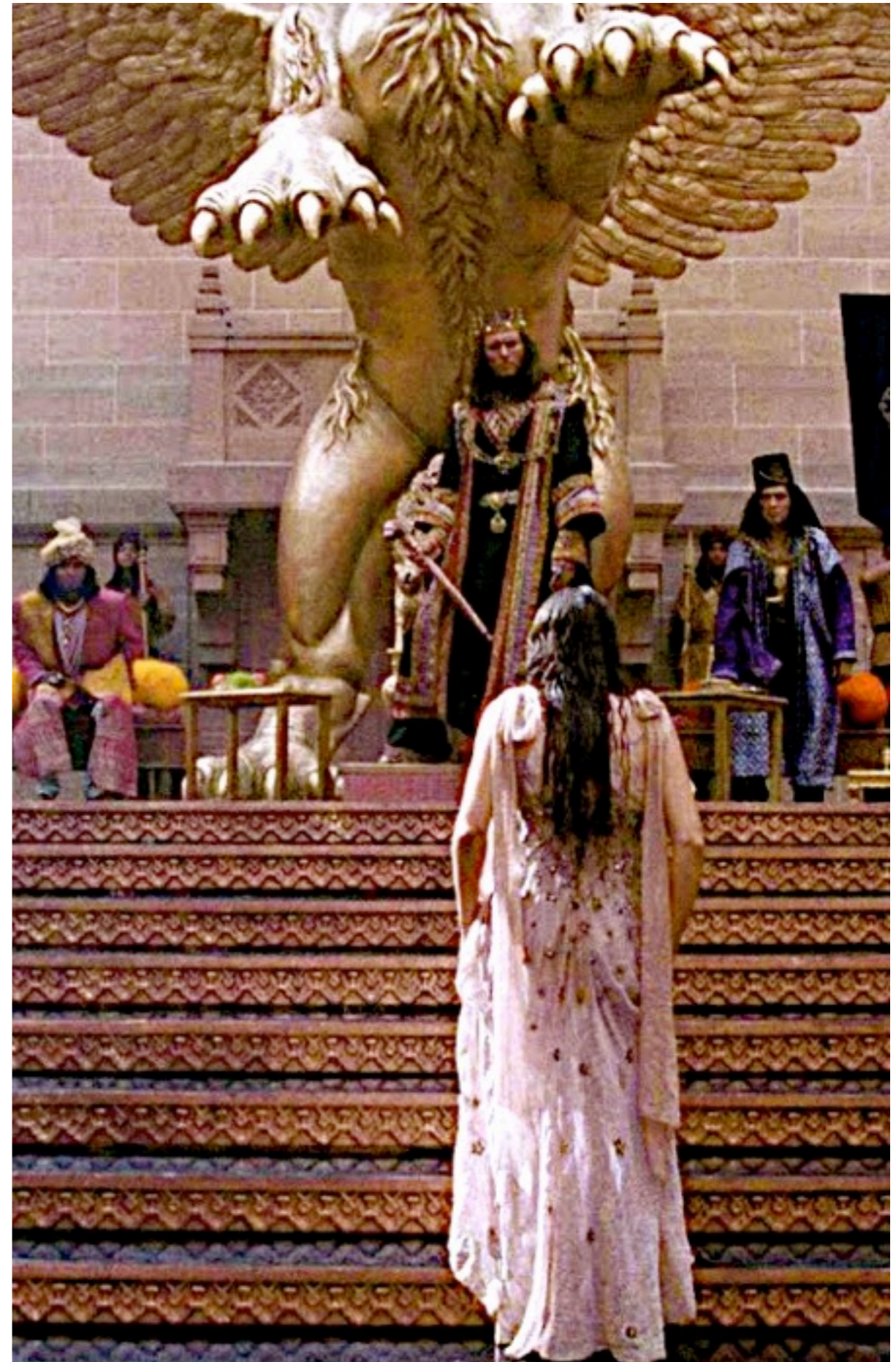
# “Large doors swing on small hinges”.

- The course of history is sometimes determined by the smallest things.
- The “coincidences” (God’s finger print) in Esther 1 and 2:
  - Esther is adopted by Mordecai and is very beautiful.
  - Esther is chosen to be Xerxes queen.
  - Mordecai accidentally over hears a plot to kill the king, informs Esther who tells the king but strangely Mordecai is not rewarded.
- These are the seeds of Haman’s defeat.



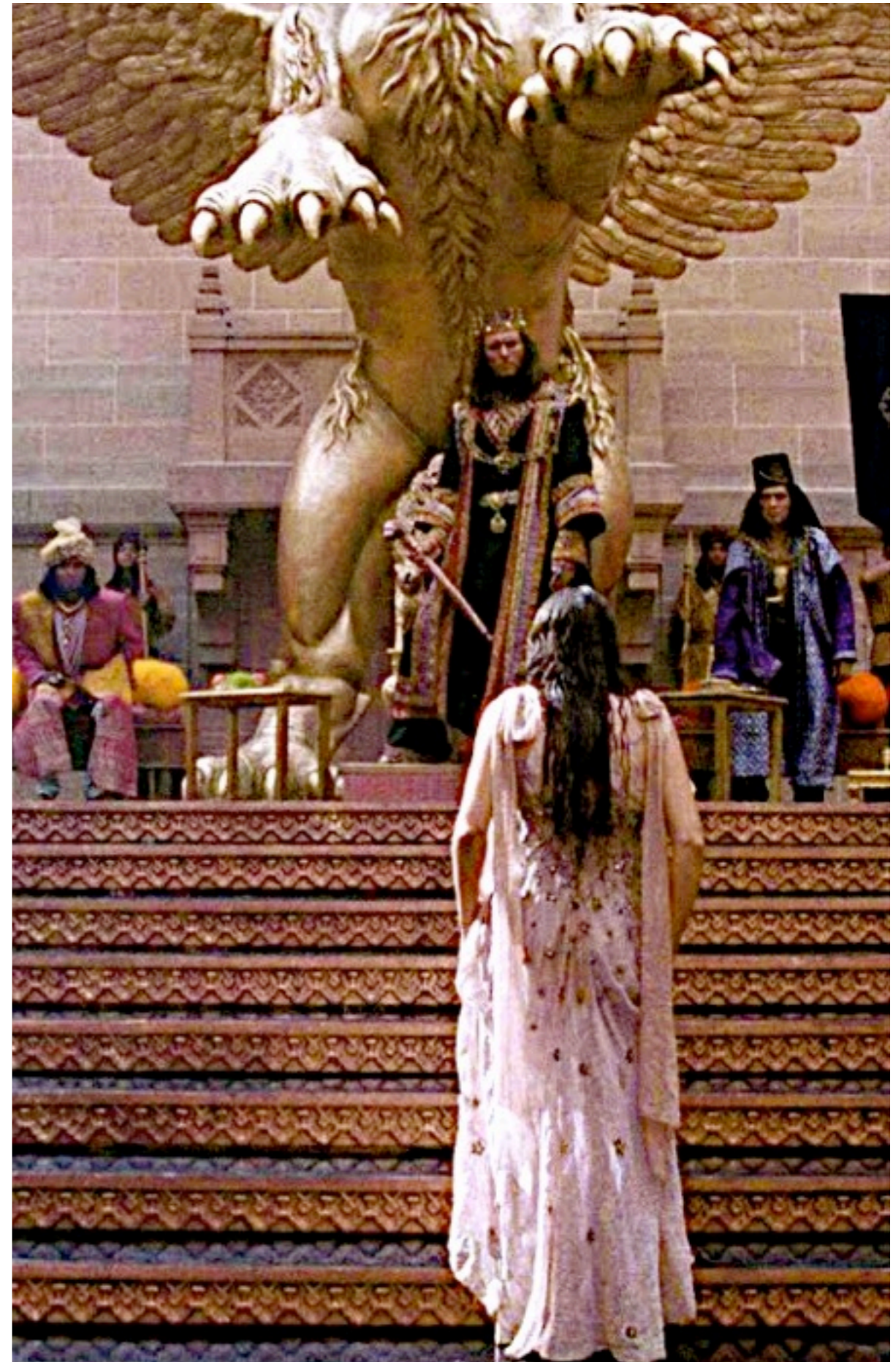
# Esther pleads for the Jews

- Mordecai commands Esther to go to the king and plead for the Jews.
- Esther requires all the Jews in the capital to pray and fast for 3 days with her before she enters throne room.
- She risks death appearing before the king not summoned.
- The king is so favourably impressed with her beauty and courage she can ask for anything.



# Esther pleads for the Jews

- Esther requests the king and Haman to come to a banquet she has prepared but does not make her real request. Haman is so proud to be the only guest besides the king and so mad at Mordecai who still doesn't bow that he builds a huge gallows to hang Mordecai on the next day.
- Xerxes love and curiosity are excited by Esther.



# God at work behind the scenes

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- The king can not sleep that night.
- The court records are read to him to help him to sleep.
- The section is read about how Mordecai saved the king's life but received no reward. By chance?
- The plot against the Jews becomes personal to the king:
  - Haman wants to kill his queen!
  - Haman wants to kill the very man who saved his life!
  - In a rage the king orders Haman hung on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.





# God at work behind the scenes

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- The sequence of seemingly unrelated events which had begun years before came together at precisely the right moment to cause Haman's complete defeat.
- But the Jews are still under threat of death because the Edict can not be changed.
- The King appoints Mordecai to replace Haman.
- Mordecai devises an Edict which empowers the Jews to defend themselves against those planning to kill them. The strategy is successful and Mordecai becomes a hero to the whole empire.



# Purim

- The Jews still celebrate Purim as Mordecai commanded in Esther 9 nearly 2500 years ago.
- The feast of Purim reminds them that God will preserve them.



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Make some noise! Come dressed as your favorite Purim character!

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HAMENTASHEN • FOODMUSIC • FACE PAINTING • AND MUCH MORE!

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**מגילת אסתר**

Join us for the reading of the Megillah and Party on  
Monday, March 9th, 7pm  
Purim Drawing will be held following Megillah reading.

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**SUPPORT OUR SHALOM**

**A PURIM DRAWING**  
OHR SHALOM SYNAGOGUE  
A PURIM DRAWING  
GRAND PRIZE: WORTH UP TO \$2500

Monday, March 9th, 2009  
Drawing following the Megillah reading

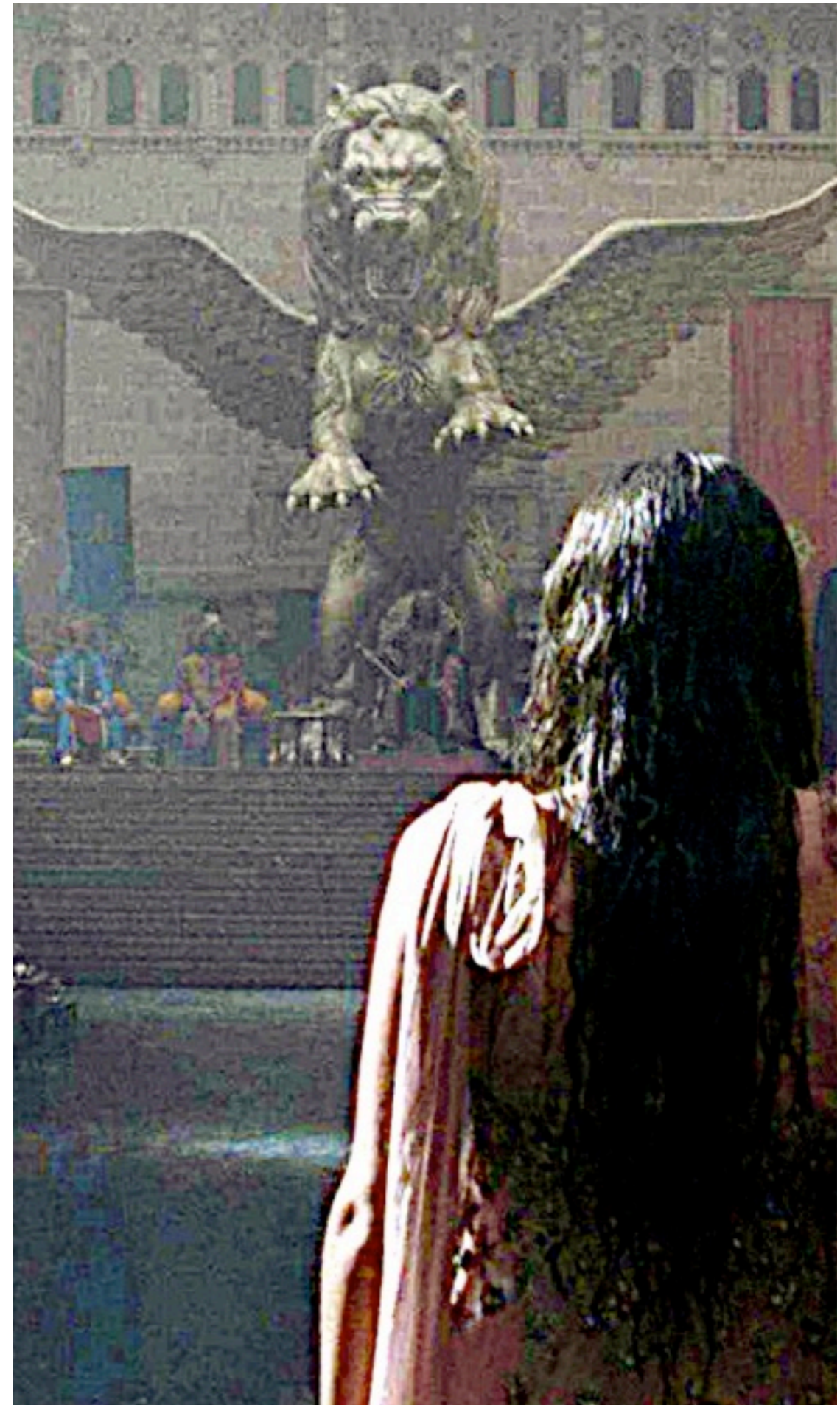
Suggested Donation: \$100  
Take-out for groups is available

Buy, sell, or share a ticket with a friend for a chance to win up to \$2500!

# God made it possible but Esther had to act

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- God can be seen to be at work in the small things of our lives if we have eyes to see.
- He will arrange circumstances to bring about His purposes but we can not be passive on lookers.
- We can not do nothing and expect God to work everything out.
- Esther had a critical part to play and there will come times when we will have a critical part to play.



# God made it possible but Esther had to act

- The key to the success of God's plan to save His people is in Chapter 4:12-14  
“When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: “Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?”” (Esther 4:12–14, NIV84)



# God made it possible but Esther had to act

- Esther had to use the situation she was in.
- She had to act and risk all.
- But she didn't act without first praying and fasting for 3 days.
- This was the critical step that enabled God's careful preparations to bear fruit.
- God has a way through but His plan will bear no fruit unless we do our part which may require prayer and fasting.



# The finger print of God in our lives.

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- Each one of us is where we are now not by chance but because God has been at work in the background.
- You need to watch for the critical moments in which you will be asked to be the small hinge on which big doors will open.
- These are moments are often full of stress and uncertainties, “Yet who knows whether you have come to [this moment] for such a time as this?”

