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In popular culture today, we are drawn to fictional stories of courageous men and women who stand for honor and good in the face of opposition. From the American “Wild West” to outer space, these heroes prevail in spite of seemingly impossible circumstances.

What if I told you that in the Word of God we can see stories greater than those? And that these men and women in the Bible were *real* people in *real* situations? Esther was one such hero who exemplified courageous living in the face of seemingly impossible circumstances and saved her people from certain annihilation.

The young Judean woman Esther’s story began in the Persian Empire. Long ago, a large number of Judeans had been taken captive to Babylon, which was subsequently conquered by the enormous Persian Empire. At the time of Esther, this empire was ruled by a king named Ahasuerus. After King Ahasuerus deposed his former queen, Esther was selected to be queen in her place.

*Esther 2:17:*

*And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.*

Mordecai, Esther’s cousin who raised her as his own daughter, instructed her to not reveal her people nor her kindred at this time.

A man named Haman, an Agagite, is the “bad guy” in this record. The Agagites were descendants of the Amalekites, who were established enemies of God’s people (Exodus 17:14,16). Haman was a prince in Ahasuerus’s empire who had recently been promoted above all the other princes (Esther 3:1). With this promotion, the king made a commandment that his servants were to bow to Haman and to reverence him. However, Mordecai refused to bow to this enemy of God’s people as others did.

This infuriated Haman, so he hatched a plan of revenge not only on Mordecai but on all of the Judean people (Esther 3:2,5,6). Haman convinced King Ahasuerus to make a decree that all of the Judeans in the Persian Empire were to be destroyed. The king did this, not knowing that his queen, Esther, was Judean. And according to Persian law, once put in writing, a decree of the king could not be reversed.

Mordecai sent word by one of Esther's attendants for Esther to intervene on the Judeans' behalf. She sent word back that the king had not called for her in thirty days and that anyone who went into the king's inner court uninvited and did not gain favor would be executed (Esther 4:11).

*Esther 4:13,14:*

*Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews [Judeans].*

*For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews [Judeans] from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*

Now what would Esther do?

*Esther 4:15,16:*

*Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews [Judeans] that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.*

Mordecai did all that Esther commanded him; Esther took the risk and with all her courage went to the king's inner court...uninvited.

*Esther 5:2:*

*And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.*

Esther responded to the king's favor and invited him and Haman to a banquet (Esther 5:4,5) and then a second banquet. It took great mental strength and control of her emotions to dine with the man responsible for her people's death sentence. At this second banquet Esther wisely revealed that she was a Judean, that her people had been condemned to death, and that Haman was responsible (Esther 7:3-6).

The king was appalled at Haman's treachery and evil character, and Haman was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai. And although King Ahasuerus could not legally reverse his decree against the Judeans, at Esther's request he made a second decree that granted the Judeans the right to defend themselves. As a result, God's people were prepared and ready to defend themselves when the decree to destroy them took effect.

*Esther 9:2:*

*The Jews [Judeans] gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people.*

They were even helped by all the rulers of the provinces, other leaders, and officers of the king (Esther 9:3). With God's help, the Judeans prevailed. Because of Esther's courageous actions, the Judeans received deliverance from a potentially disastrous situation.

Esther was a Biblical hero, but she was also human. She needed Mordecai's encouragement to act; and when she did act, she exemplified a courageous lifestyle because she refused to stay silent even when it might have meant death for her. She saved her people from hardship and destruction.

In the many moments of our day, we can exemplify courageous living as we speak up and stand for God even in seemingly impossible situations. We are the heroes of our own stories of courageous living as we stand for God and His Word.

*For more information, visit [www.theway.org](http://www.theway.org)*

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