

WOMEN IN THE
BIBLE
RUTH &
ESTHER

2020
7
SESSION

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BIBLE
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ESTHER

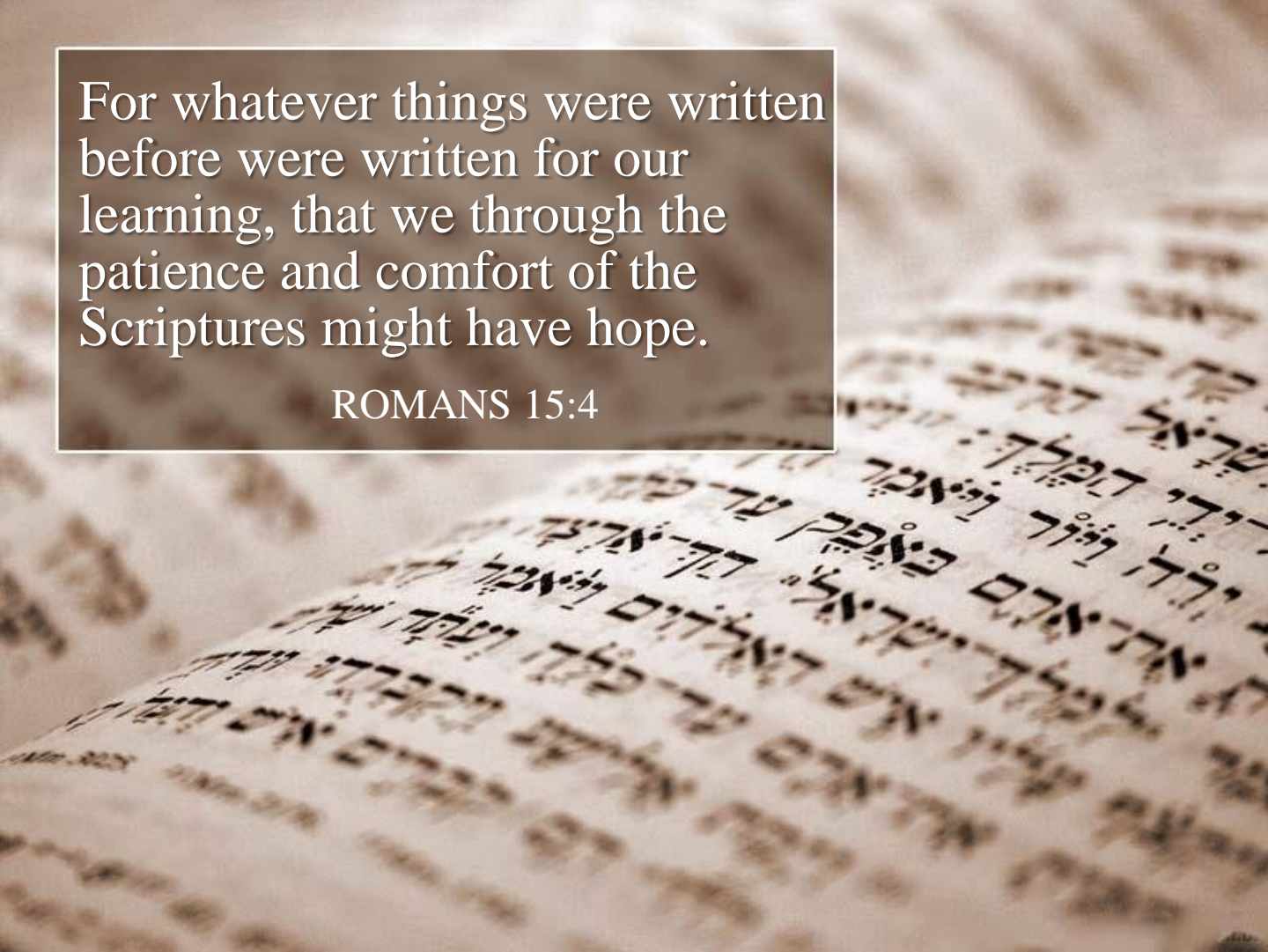
PART 4

The book of
Esther



For whatever things were written
before were written for our
learning, that we through the
patience and comfort of the
Scriptures might have hope.

ROMANS 15:4



esther

- One of only two Bible books named for women, many including Luther and Calvin have questioned why this book is in the Bible.
- After all:
 - It doesn't mention God
 - It doesn't predict the Messiah
 - It doesn't mention faith or worship
 - It doesn't mention anything "religious"
 - There's no uplifting "moral of the story"

Underlying Concepts

- Esther – the book of something hidden (Book of Esther)
- Purim – the casting of lots – “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.” (Proverb 16:33)
- The Law of the Medes and the Persians, a royal decree cannot be changed. (Daniel 6:8)
- Coincidence or providential hand of God?
- Ancient Everlasting Hatred (Ezekiel 35:5-7)



עוֹלָם אֵיבָת

עוֹלָם אֵיבֶת - Haman's Genealogy

Amalek

c. 1446 BC

King Agag

c. 1012 BC

Hammedatha

Haman

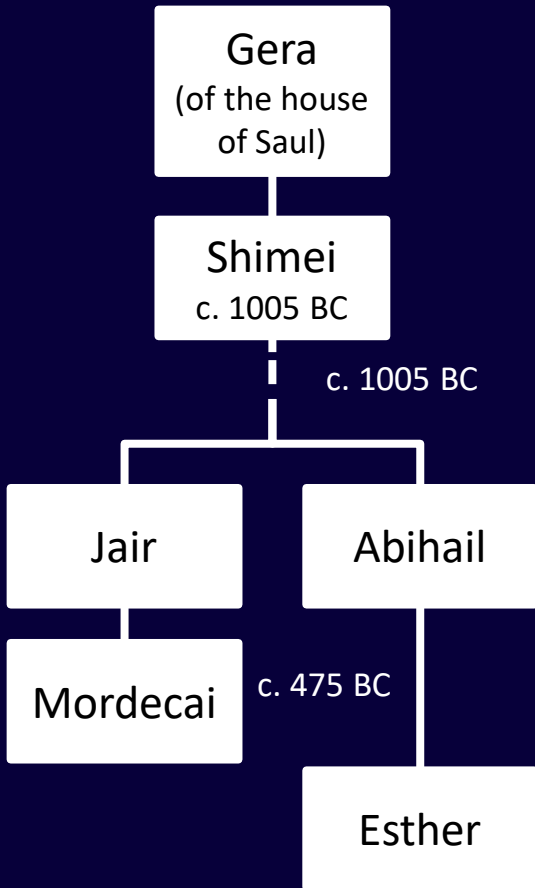
c. 475 BC

- Amalek fought with Israel at Rephidim (Ex 17:8-16).
- Amalekites attacked rear of marching Israelites in the Exodus (Deut 25:17-19).
- **“YHWH will have war with Amalek from generation to generation”** (Ex 17:14-18).

- Samuel ordered Saul to **“go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not.”** (1 Sam 15:1-3).
- Saul spared Amalekite king Agag, so God took the kingdom from him. (1 Sam 5:7-28)
- Samuel killed Agag but some Agagites escaped. In fact, an Amalekite claimed to have killed Saul in battle. (2 Sam 1:1-10)

Saul's disobedience to God spared Agag resulting in Haman.

עוֹלָם אֵיבָת - Mordecai's Genealogy



- As David fled from Absalom Shimei ran along the ridge overlooking the road, cursing, throwing stones at him, and saying, *"Come out, come out, thou bloody man and thou man of Belial the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son, and behold thou art taken in thy mischief because thou art a bloody man"* (2 Sam 16:5-13). Abishai would have "taken off his head" then and there but David let him live.
- When David became king, Shimei met him with a thousand Benjamites, and begged David to spare him. Abishai would again have slain Shimei, but David on his day of restoration to the kingdom said "thou shalt not die."

David showing Shimei **mercy**
led to Mordecai and Esther.

The literary structure

- Prologue (situation)
- 2-3 Xerxes' first decree
- 4-5 Haman's exasperation with Mordecai
- Xerxes insomnia
- 6-7 Mordecai's exaltation over Haman
- 8-9 Xerxes second decree
- 10 Epilogue (celebration)

Part 1

Part 2

DANGER

(1-5)

DELIVERANCE

(6-10)

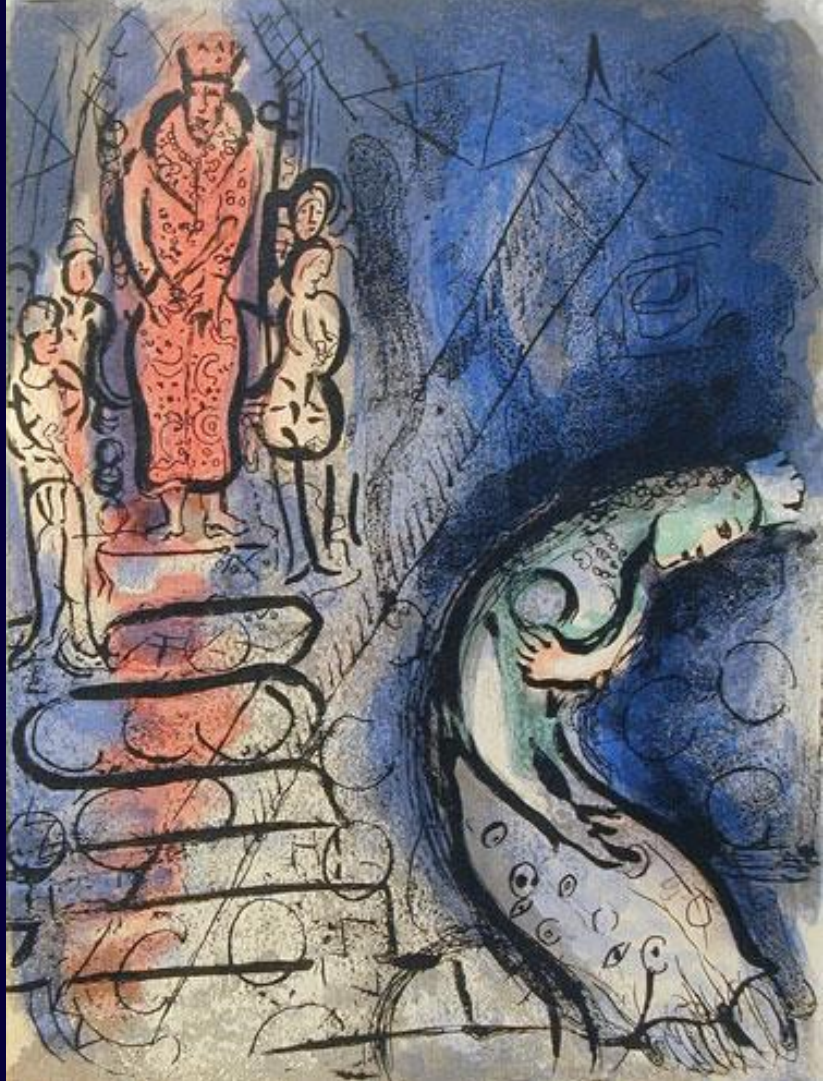
1 King Ahasuerus gave a feast for all his generals and officials. He ordered Queen Vashti to show off her beauty, but she refused, so his counselors advised him to replace her.



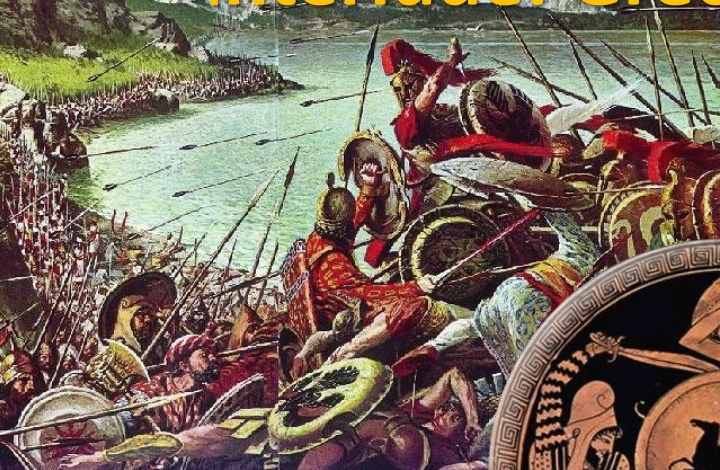
"Queen Vashti deposed" by Ernest Normand, 1890.

“... let it be
recorded in the
laws of the Persians
and the Medes, so
that it will not be
altered, that Vashti
shall come no more
before King
Ahasuerus...”

“Ahaseurus Banishes Vashti –
Assérus Chasse Vashti”
Marc Chagall, 1960.

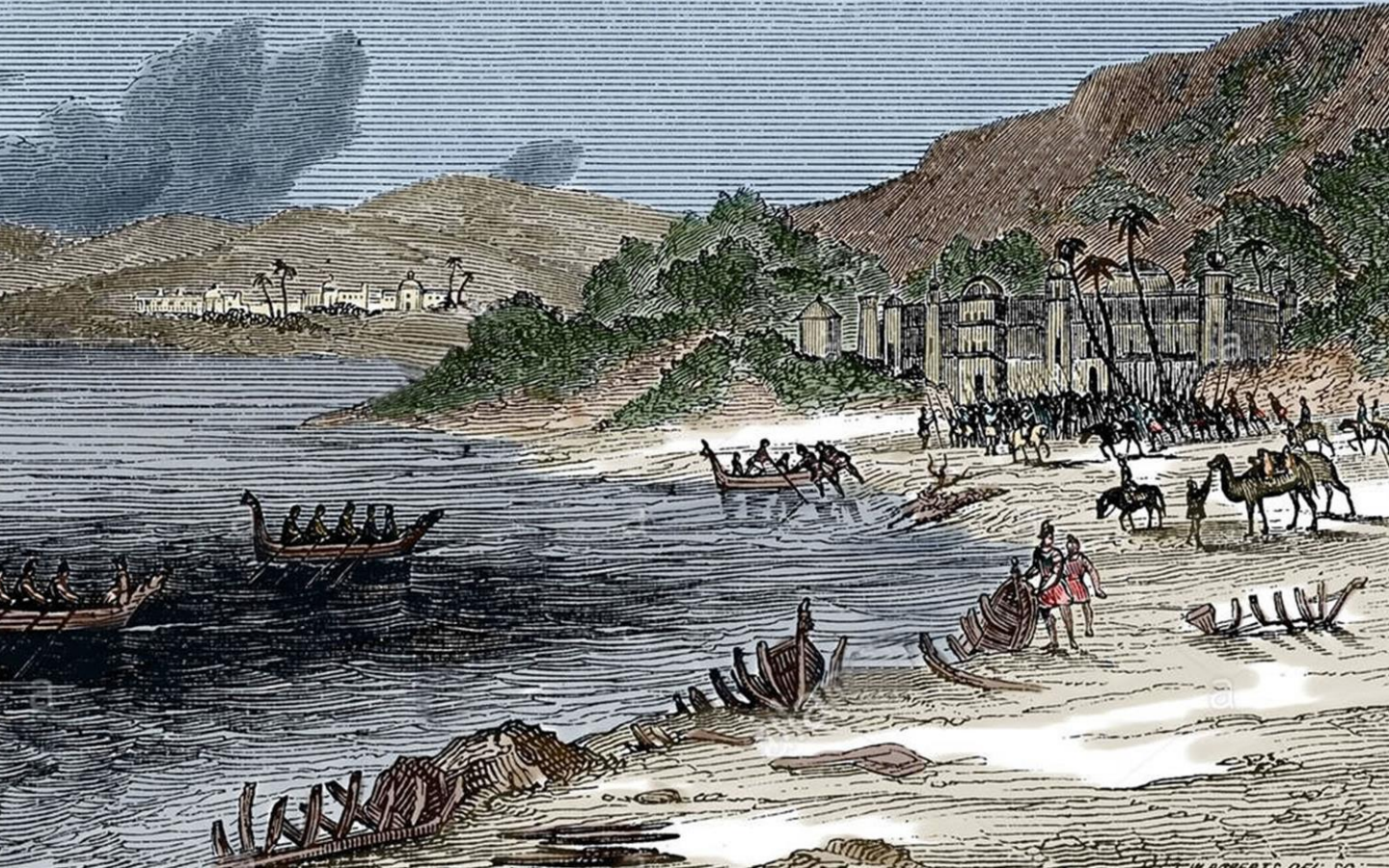


Interlude: Greco-Persian War



481-479 BC

Only 5.000 of the massive defeated Persian army and navy managed to straggle back to Asia.



2

Ex-queen Vashti was banned from ever seeing Xerxes. Memucan and other advisers advised Xerxes to hold a competition for a new queen.



Mordecai raised Esther. She was taken into the king's harem and was chosen as queen. Mordecai instructed her to hide her ethnicity.



Mordecai overheard a plot and told Esther who told Xerxes.



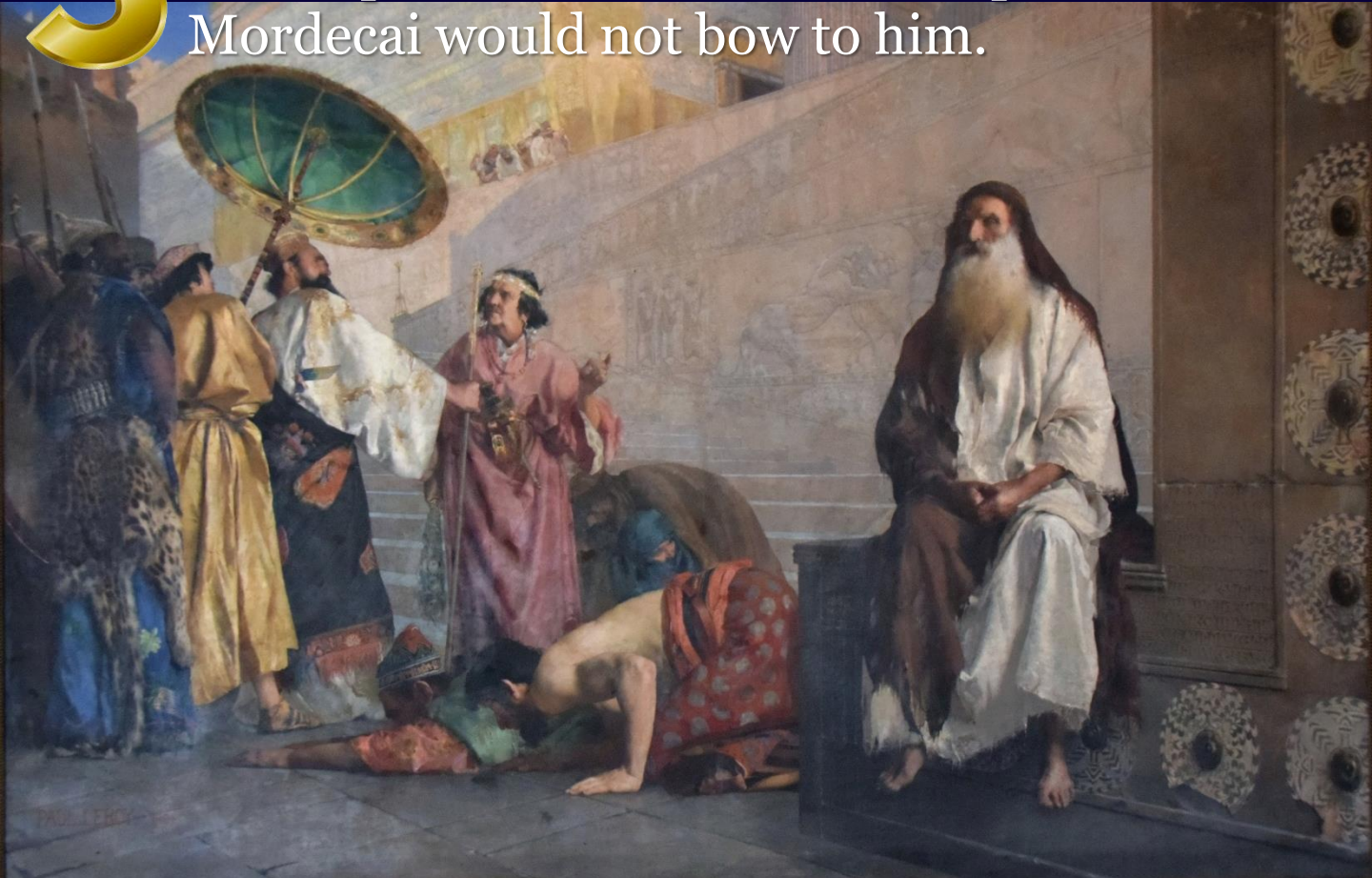
The plotters were executed and the incident forgotten.

**TWO
YEARS
LATER**

OR SO

3

The king promoted Haman to Grand Vizier and required all to bow when he passed, but Mordecai would not bow to him.





A furious Haman
bribed Xerxes to let
him kill all Jews.

The king gave his
seal, the lot was
cast, and
the date to
kill all Jews
was set as
13 Adar,
the last
date of the
year.

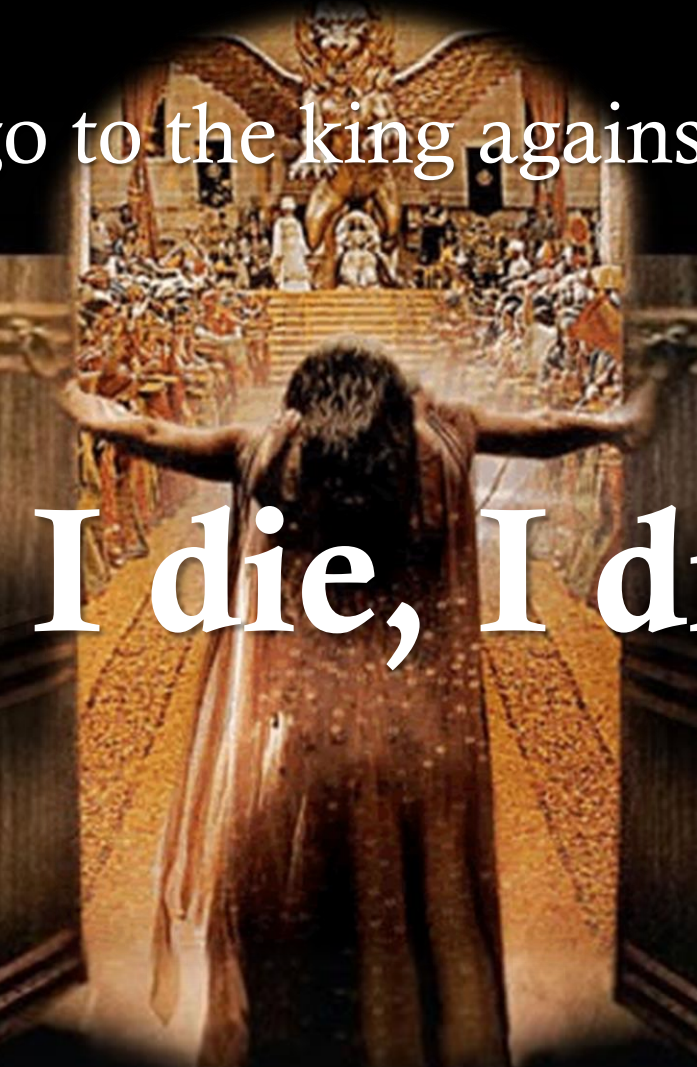
4 Mordecai asked
Esther to plead with
the king. Esther said,
“I cannot. It is against the
law to approach unbidden.”
“Perhaps you were born...



FOR SUCH A
time
AS **THIS**

“I will go to the king against the law.

“If I die, I die!”

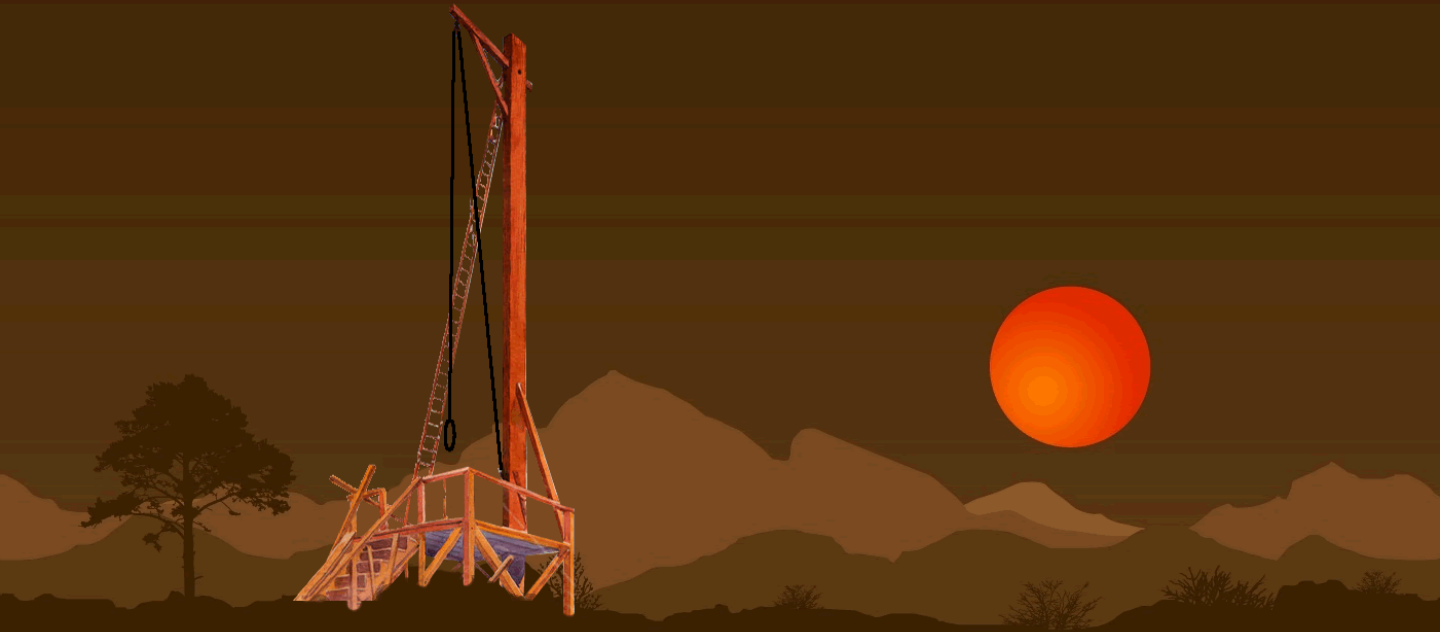


5

Esther won favour with the king and invited the king and Haman to wine and dessert. There, she invited them to a feast the next day.



'Permission to Speak' by Lilian Broca, 2009.



That night, Haman built an enormous gallows from which to hang Mordecai.

Esther

Esther 6 – Just Deserts

¹ That night the king could not sleep.



So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

- ² And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.



³ Then the king said, “What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?”

And the king’s servants who attended him said, “Nothing has been done for him.”





4 So the king said, “Who *is* in the court?” Now Haman had *just* entered the outer court of the king’s palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

5 The king’s servants said to him, “Haman is there, standing in the court.” And the king said, “Let him come in.”

6 So Haman came in, and the king asked him, “What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?”

Now Haman thought in his heart,
“Whom would the king delight
to honor more than me?”



⁷ And Haman answered the king, “*For the man whom the king delights to honor,* ⁸ let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head. ⁹ Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: ‘Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!’ ”

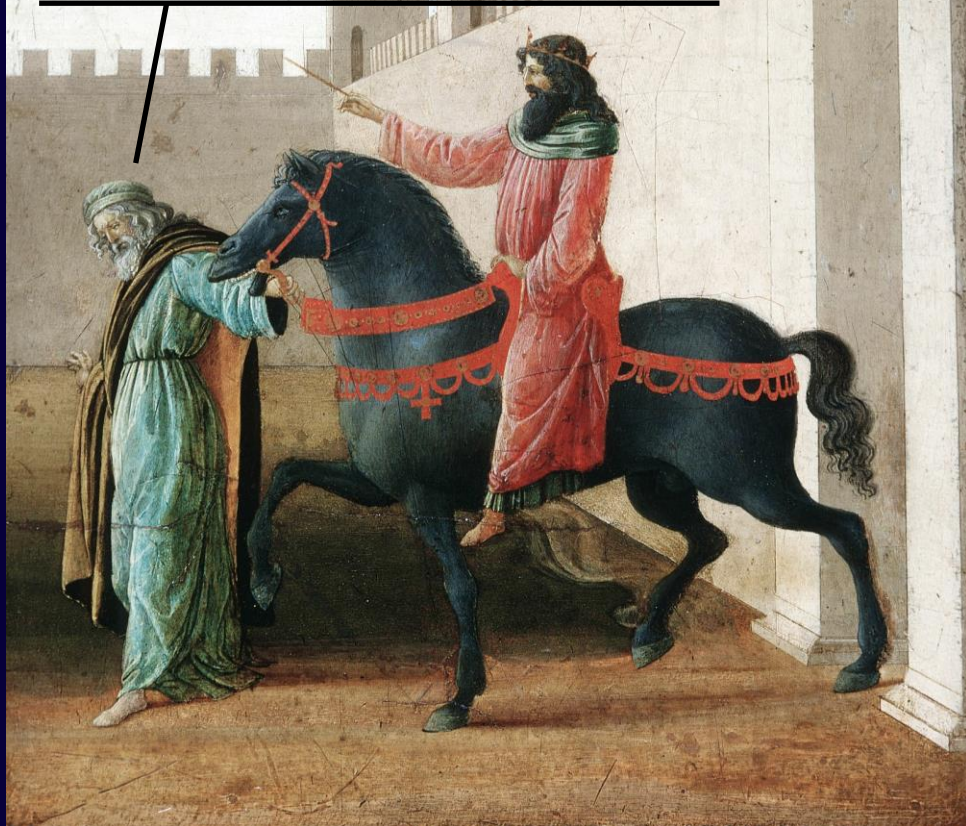


10 Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate!

Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken."

'The Triumph of Mordecai'
by Sandro Botticelli, c. 1475.

"Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"



¹¹ So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him,

**“THUS SHALL IT
BE DONE TO THE
MAN WHOM THE
KING DELIGHTS
TO HONOR!”**

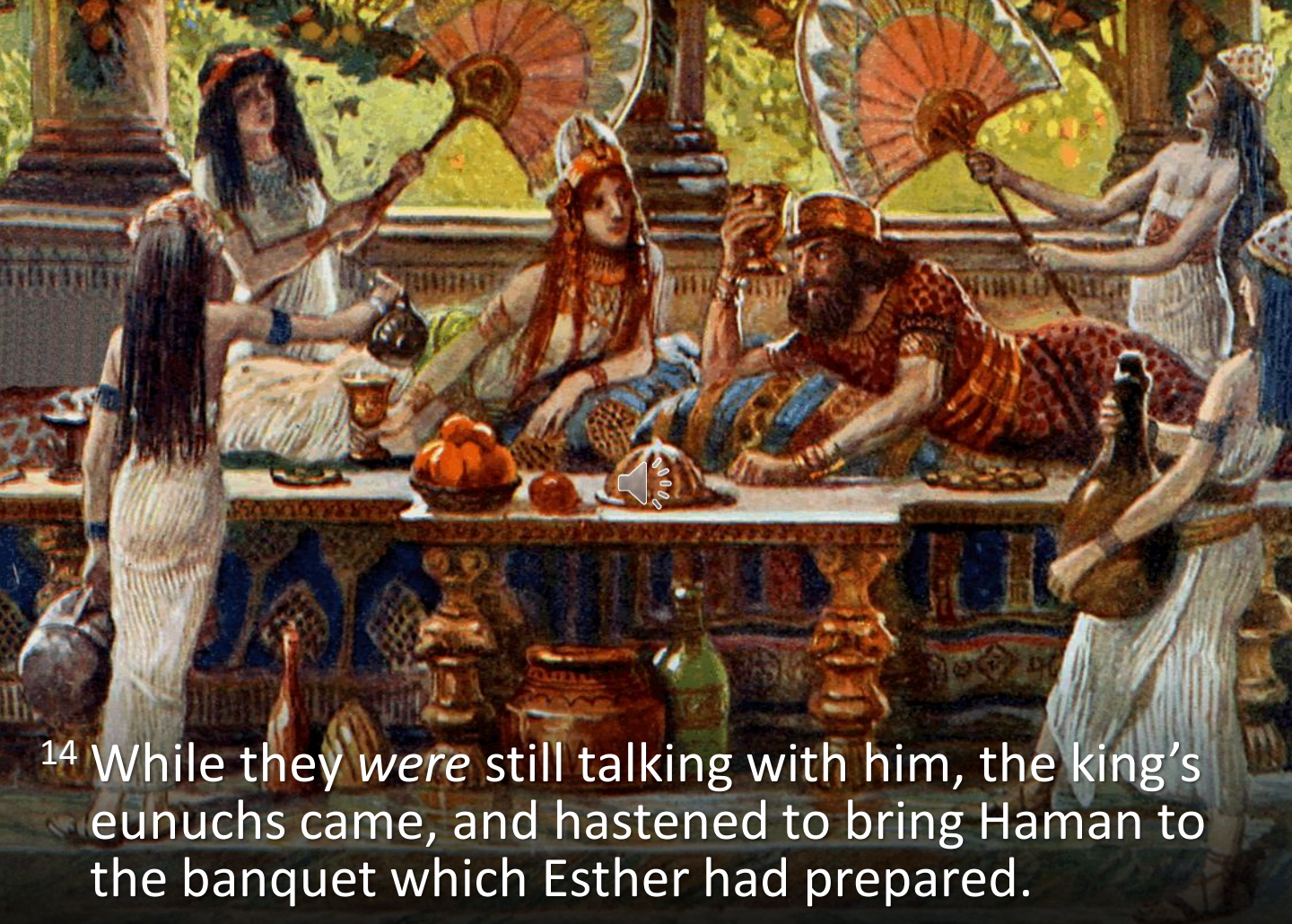


‘The Royal Horse’ by Lilian Broca, 2002.

12 Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.

13 When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."





¹⁴ While they *were* still talking with him, the king's eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

The book of

Esther

Chapter 7

Esther 7 – Haman's Comeuppance

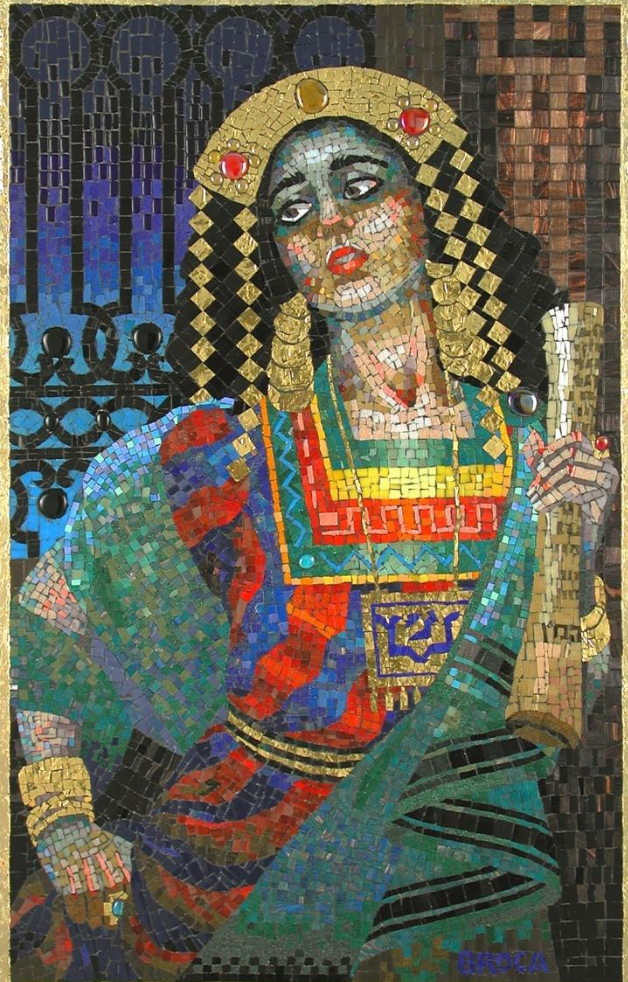


- ¹ So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther.
- ² And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, “What *is* your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what *is* your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!”

³ Then Queen Esther answered and said, “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request.

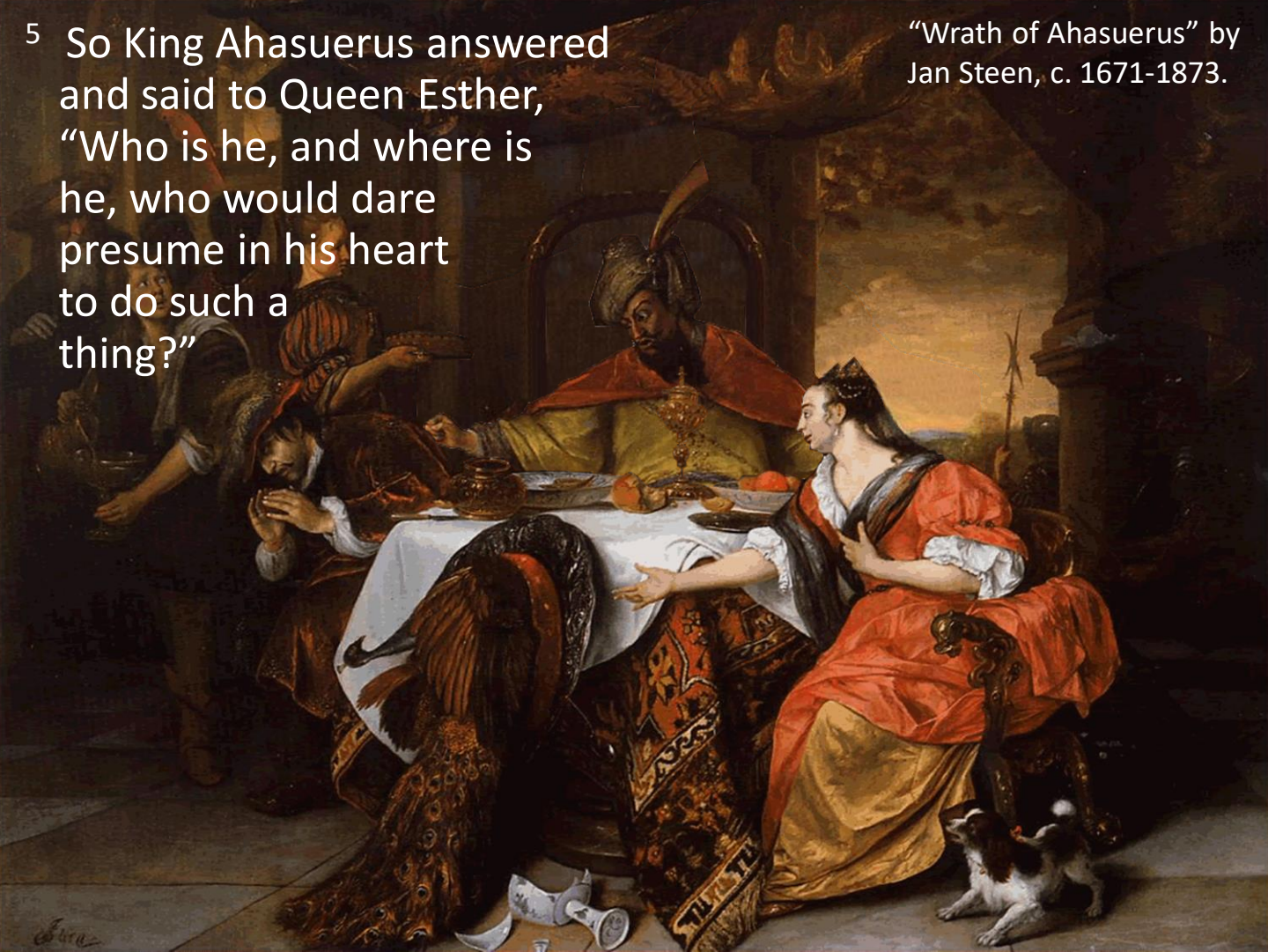
⁴ For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king’s loss.”

‘Evidence of Guilt’ by Lilian Broca, 2002.



5 So King Ahasuerus answered
and said to Queen Esther,
“Who is he, and where is
he, who would dare
presume in his heart
to do such a
thing?”

“Wrath of Ahasuerus” by
Jan Steen, c. 1671-1873.



⁶ And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman!" So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.



"Esther Denouncing Haman" by Ernest Normand, 1888.

7 Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine *and went* into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king.



“Haman begging Esther for mercy” by Pieter Lastman, 1618.

⁸ When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther *was*. Then the king said, “Will he also assault the queen while I *am* in the house?”

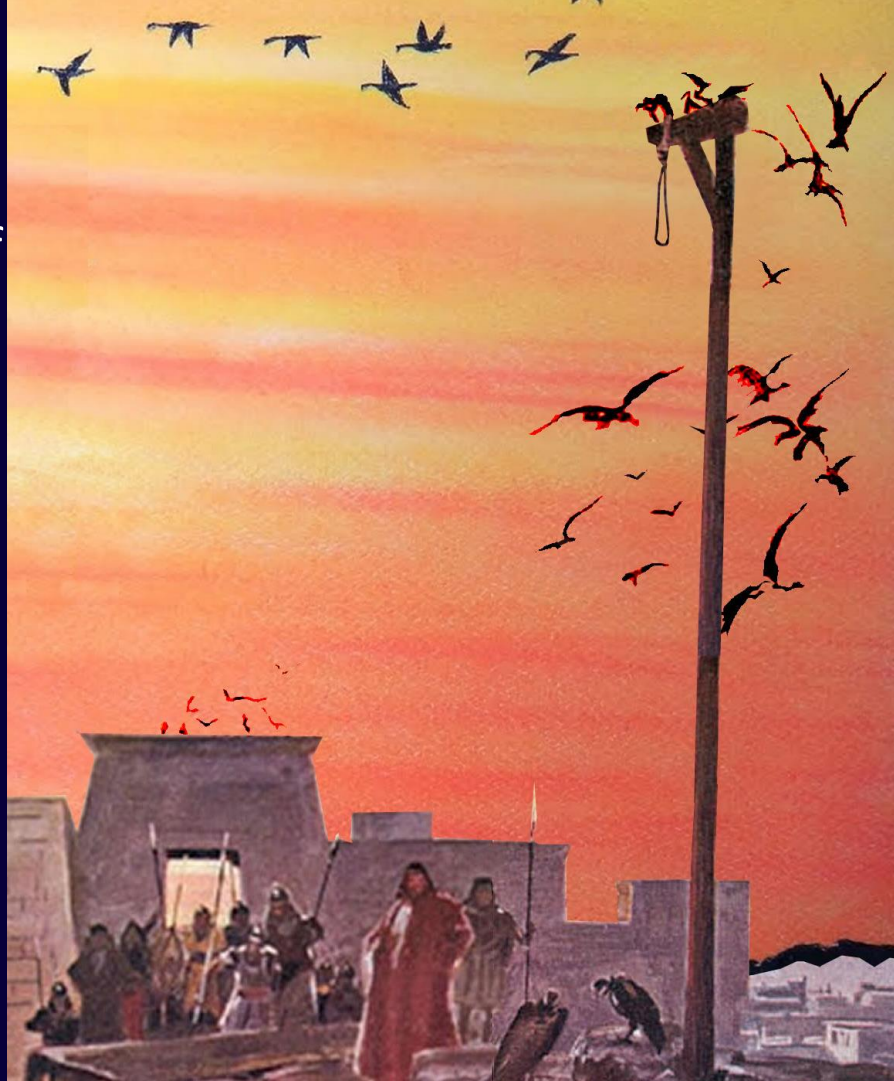


“The Festival of Esther” by Edward Armitage, 1865.

As the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

⁹ Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf, is standing at the house of Haman."

Then the king said, "Hang him on it!"



Zeresh's Math



4m

47 cubits=
70 feet =
21 metres=
12 Hamans
high

17m



50 cubits=
75 feet =
23 metres=
13 Hamans
high



¹⁰ So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's wrath subsided.



"The Book of Esther, Szyk and Haman"
by Arthur Szyk, 1950.



A large, bright meteor streaks diagonally across the upper half of the image, leaving a long, glowing orange and yellow trail. Below the meteor, the curved horizon of the Earth is visible, showing a thin layer of atmosphere and a dark, textured surface. The background is a deep black space filled with numerous small, distant stars.

**There's just
one minor
problem...**

But, there's one minor problem...

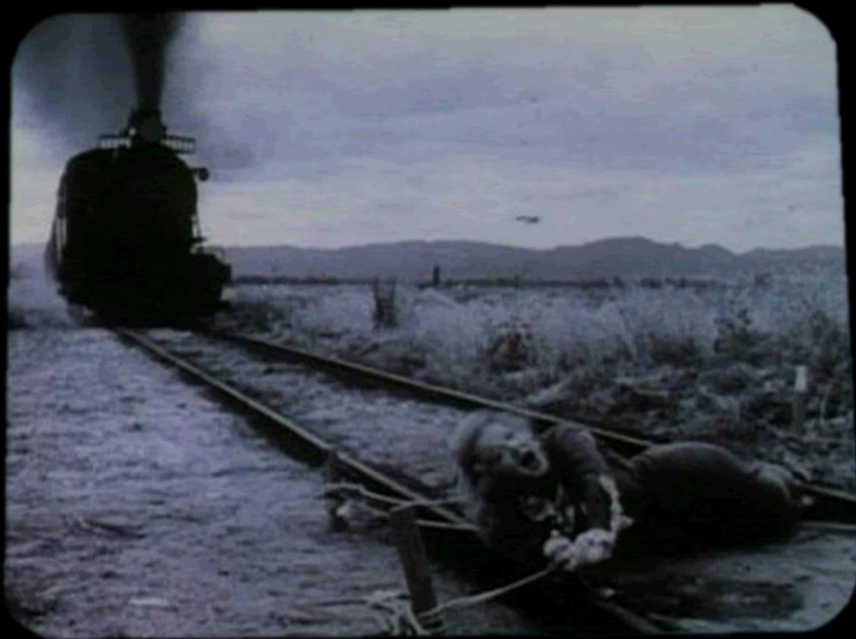
- Haman is dead, we can breath a sigh of relief, can't we?
- But the edict to kill all Jews stands, and Xerxes cannot overturn or change it.
- God does not leave anything undone, and he will take care of all the details, but we will have to wait to see how this is done.



*Though the mills of God grind slowly,
yet they grind exceedingly small;
Though with patience he stands waiting,
with exactness grinds He all.*

“Retribution” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1846.

**IS THIS FINALLY IT FOR
ESTHER AND HER PEOPLE?**



TUNE IN NEXT WEEK.