



# Community Group Discussion Guide

January 25, 2026

**Ester 3:7-15;8:3-17 | God's People Rescued**

## MOTIVATE

⇒ *Starter Question: Have you ever witnessed a rescue? Why are we drawn to stories of rescue?*

## DISCUSS

In Esther 3:7-15 and 8:3-17, God rescued His people from imminent destruction. Though many Jews returned to Judah to reclaim and rebuild the way of life that had been lost, many stayed put. The original exiles who had survived the deportations settled in their new home, married, and had children, just as Jeremiah had instructed (Jeremiah 29:4-7). Over the seventy years of exile and beyond, generations were born and raised in the foreign lands of Babylon and Persia. With the passage of time, these lands no longer seemed so foreign; rather, they had become home.

⇒ *Is of comfort to you to remember that even in these places distant from their homeland, God was watching over His people, keeping His promises and covenants?*

The book of Esther takes place in Persia about fifty-five years after King Cyrus issued his decree that allowed Jews to return to Judah to rebuild the temple. God's name is not mentioned once in the entire book, which is ten chapters of narrative, dialogue, political intrigue, the threat of genocide, and national vindication. However, all this happened and was recorded for a reason. The book of Esther was written to show how God, even behind the scenes, is in control and sovereign over the everyday events of our lives.

⇒ *Have you found this to be true in your own life? Can you give an example?*

## 1. Esther 3:7-15: Even at the brink of seeming destruction, God is working among His people.

**Esther 3:7-9:** <sup>7</sup> *In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, they cast lots) before Haman day after day; and they cast it month after month till the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. <sup>8</sup> Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not to the king's profit to tolerate them. <sup>9</sup> If it please the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay 10,000 talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business, that they may put it into the king's treasuries."*

Esther 3 comes from the middle of the Esther narrative after she had been selected as queen by King Ahasuerus. Also known as Xerxes, Ahasuerus ruled from 486–465 BC. Nisan is the first month of the Jewish year, coinciding with March and April. Known as the month of spring and redemption, the Passover is celebrated during this time, marking the Israelites' exodus from Egypt after centuries of slavery. Lot-casting was a common system of decision-making for ancient peoples. The primary Hebrew word for "lots" refers to small stones cast to produce a decision. In his scheming, Haman would cast the pur, the Persian word for lots, to receive "divine" guidance.

Embedded in Esther's colorful story—filled with beauty treatments, harems, lavish banquets, and

dangerous requests—there was a power struggle. Two men serving the king began to clash. Haman, a recently promoted official, was enraged when Mordecai refused to honor him. Esther 2:5-6 provides genealogical details for Mordecai, Esther's cousin and legal guardian, saying his great-grandfather Kish was taken into exile in 597 BC. Esther's family had been in exile for well over a century.

When Haman learned Mordecai was a Jew, he decided to destroy all of Mordecai's people with him (Esther 3:6). Haman would not rest until Mordecai—and every Jew in the Persian Empire—was put to death. As the highest-ranking official in the nation and the king's right-hand man, Haman posed an imminent threat to God's people. With malicious intent, Haman manipulated King Ahasuerus to decree the annihilation of the Jews.

⇒ *Why do you think God allows hatred and harm for His people?*

Haman was an "Agagite," a descendant of King Agag of the Amalekites. The Amalekites were ancient enemies of the Jews from the time they left Egypt (Exodus 17:8-16). King Saul, by the command of God, was supposed to wipe them out as a judgment for their violent treatment of God's people (1 Samuel 15). This interpersonal conflict between Haman and Mordecai was more than a feud between two men. It was a centuries-long conflict between two people groups on different sides of God's favor. These events took place during the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus's reign, which means Haman had years to devise this wicked plot to destroy Mordecai and the Jews.

⇒ *As God's people, how can we still trust Him even when the odds seem stacked against us?*

Haman went to King Ahasuerus and denounced a people group that did not assimilate to the Persian way of life. Haman said: "Their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not to the king's profit to tolerate them." Notice that Haman never named the people group that he wanted to destroy, keeping this people anonymous. Haman's words "to the king's profit" carried the idea of monetary interest. It is very likely that due to war against Greece, the Persian Empire was stressed for money at this time.

⇒ *What personal application can you make from events like these in the book of Esther?*

⇒ *How was God using these events to draw His people to Him?*

Haman's solution to the empire's need for money was that he would wipe out this people group costing King Ahasuerus money, and even more, he would pay to have it done. The amount of silver that Haman promised to pay was incredibly large. It would have been over half the amount of the empire's tax revenue for the year. Haman's promise to pay this amount of money was likely an exaggeration, or he considered whatever silver could be received by the plundering of the Jews would go into the king's treasury as his payment. Haman's offer to pay for this annihilation may have made him seem like he had the king's best interest in mind, but the real reason for Haman's request was his hatred of Mordecai and the Jews.

⇒ *Discuss this statement: The events that turn our lives upside down do not come as a surprise to God. He's been preparing us for "such a time" all along. The book of Esther points to God's ability to reverse the evil plans of man.*

**Esther 3:10-12:** <sup>10</sup> So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. <sup>11</sup> And the king said to Haman, "The money is given

*to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you.”<sup>12</sup> Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king's satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the officials of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.*

Unaware of Queen Esther’s Jewish identity, King Ahasuerus issued a decree that called for the destruction of the Jews. He gave Haman his signet ring in order to make this decree across the empire. King Ahasuerus was not known in history for his high regard of human life, but it was reckless for a king to make a murderous decree without knowing the full story. King Ahasuerus thought only of the money that this extermination would bring him. With an entire people group’s lives on the line, the king did not even ask who would be exterminated. He simply told Haman to go and do as he saw fit.

- ⇒ *In times when those in leadership over us behave in an unjust way, why is it important for us to recall that God is always sovereign and providential?*
- ⇒ *Discuss this statement: Knowing that God is working all things for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28), we trust in His promise to fulfill His plan, even when we do not understand our present circumstances.*

**Esther 3:13-15:** <sup>13</sup> *Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with instruction to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.* <sup>14</sup> *A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation to all the peoples to be ready for that day.* <sup>15</sup> *The couriers went out hurriedly by order of the king, and the decree was issued in Susa the citadel. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.*

Instead of acting justly and protecting the peoples he was ruling over, the king allowed the proclamation to go forth that the Jews would be wiped out. The king’s decree spread throughout the empire, translated into every language. Haman’s plan of destruction had been set in motion. This decree was written exactly as Haman commanded: the officials were to destroy all the Jewish people, young and old, women and children—and plunder their possessions on a single day, the thirteenth day of Adar, the twelfth month. The empire had an entire year to plan the destruction of the Jews. While there was confusion in the city over this decree, the king was completely ignorant to the devastation he just caused.

- ⇒ *What might it have been like to have been a Jew during that time, having an entire year to think about your destruction and being powerless to do anything about it?*
- ⇒ *How does knowing that God not only rescues but also preserves His people shape our decisions when we face persecution?*

God was not absent or distant in this story. He had already raised up Esther to the position of queen to speak on behalf of His people. God always orchestrates events for His glory and His people’s good. While Haman sought to annihilate the Jews, God was using this decree to cause the Jews to look to Him once again for rescue and deliverance.

In Esther 4, Mordecai revealed to Esther Haman’s plot to destroy the Jews, and he urged her to intervene on behalf of their people. But that would be easier said than done. No one could approach

the king without being summoned or that person would be executed, unless the king extended his scepter and pardoned the person. Add to that barrier that the king had not summoned Esther in thirty days. In Esther 4:13-14, Mordecai said to Esther, "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish."

⇒ *How has God prepared you for particular opportunities or seasons you didn't see coming?*

Esther asked Mordecai and the Jewish people to fast on her behalf for three days. She said: "Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish." Esther risked her life for the salvation of her people. Eventually she revealed Haman's plot to the king and revealed her heritage as a Jew (Esther 7:3-4). The king executed Haman on the very gallows he built for Mordecai. The king also gave Esther the house of Haman and the dead official's signet ring to Mordecai (Esther 8:1-2). However, Esther's work intervening for her people was not over yet.

⇒ *Discuss the amount of trust in God it takes to be able to say, "If I perish, I perish."*

⇒ *What risks are you willing to take for God?*

## **2. Esther 8:3-17: God carries out His purposes of rescue and deliverance.**

**Esther 8:3-6:** <sup>3</sup> *Then Esther spoke again to the king. She fell at his feet and wept and pleaded with him to avert the evil plan of Haman the Agagite and the plot that he had devised against the Jews. <sup>4</sup> When the king held out the golden scepter to Esther, Esther rose and stood before the king. <sup>5</sup> And she said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and if the thing seems right before the king, and I am pleasing in his eyes, let an order be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the provinces of the king. <sup>6</sup> For how can I bear to see the calamity that is coming to my people? Or how can I bear to see the destruction of my kindred?"*

Although Haman's plot was revealed and the king acted to save Esther's life, the rest of the Jews still needed protection. Esther begged the king to write a royal edict to provide for their protection by revoking the edict inspired by Haman.

The theme of favor runs through the story of Esther. She first found favor "in the eyes of all who saw her" then with the king, gaining more favor than all the other women (Esther 2:15, 17). Later when Esther risked her life before the king, "she won favor in his sight" Esther (5:2) and appealed to that favor in her petitions (Esther 5:8; 7:3; 8:5). Esther had the gracious hand of God upon her life orchestrating these events for His glory and good purposes.

⇒ *How have you experienced the unmerited favor of God in your life?*

**Esther 8:7-8:** <sup>7</sup> *Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows, because he intended to lay hands on the Jews. <sup>8</sup> But you may write as you please with regard to the Jews, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring, for an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring cannot be revoked."*

The king informed Esther that the previous edict could not be overruled, but he could create a new edict. As he had done previously with Haman, he entrusted this task, along with his signet ring, to Mordecai and Esther.

**Esther 8:9-16:** <sup>9</sup> *The king's scribes were summoned at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day. And an edict was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews, to the satraps and the governors and the officials of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language, and also to the Jews in their script and their language.* <sup>10</sup> *And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed it with the king's signet ring. Then he sent the letters by mounted couriers riding on swift horses that were used in the king's service, bred from the royal stud,* <sup>11</sup> *saying that the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, children and women included, and to plunder their goods,* <sup>12</sup> *on one day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.* <sup>13</sup> *A copy of what was written was to be issued as a decree in every province, being publicly displayed to all peoples, and the Jews were to be ready on that day to take vengeance on their enemies.* <sup>14</sup> *So the couriers, mounted on their swift horses that were used in the king's service, rode out hurriedly, urged by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Susa the citadel.*

Mordecai acted on behalf of the people to write the royal edict of protection. This edict was sent out two months after the first decree to destroy the Jews. In it, the Jews were given the right to assemble and defend themselves, to destroy, kill, and annihilate every ethnic and provincial army hostile to them. Not only would the people be able to defend themselves, but the edict stated that they could "plunder their goods" as spoils of war. A copy of this edict would be sent out to the entire empire. While the Jews would have legal protection to fight back against any enemies, they would have to wait another nine months before that day would arrive.

⇒ *Is it a challenge for you to trust God and wait on His timing in particularly trying circumstances? Can you share an experience when you did so? What was the result?*

**Esther 8:15-17:** <sup>15</sup> *Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a robe of fine linen and purple, and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced.* <sup>16</sup> *The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor.* <sup>17</sup> *And in every province and in every city, wherever the king's command and his edict reached, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for fear of the Jews had fallen on them*

As this edict spread throughout the empire, celebration took place among the Jews. Eventually this edict would lead to the annual Jewish holiday known as the Feast of Purim. Where there had been confusion, sorrow, and fear, there was now gladness, joy, and honor because God acted through Esther to save the Jewish people. The reversal of this edict also led many of the ethnic groups of the land to profess themselves to be Jews "because fear of the Jews had overcome them." It is likely that their "profession" was simply a way to try and preserve their lives.

⇒ *While the book of Esther never mentions God, how do His presence, power, and providence permeate the story? How does His favor mark every scene?*

⇒ *What characteristics of God stand out to you as clearly displayed in the book of Esther?*

Even when we cannot sense God's tangible presence, we can trust His favor in our lives too. He is at work always for our good and His glory. The main takeaway of the book is not to become more like

Esther or Mordecai; it is to trust in the provision and power of our all-seeing, all-powerful, all-faithful covenant-keeping God.

⇒ *How is God the hero of this story?*

## **TRANSFORM**

The story of Esther reminds us that God is always at work, even when His people face destruction. He not only rescues but preserves His people so that His greater redemptive plan may be accomplished. God's hand in Esther's story points to His ultimate rescue mission—sending Jesus to redeem and rescue not just the Jews but all people of every tribe, tongue, and nation. The Lord's sovereignty is at work, even in the midst of human decisions, to bring about His greater redemptive plan.

1. HEAD: There are no accidents in the kingdom of God. He sees all, knows all, and allows only what ultimately will bring forth the greatest good for His people and His glory. Our job is to remember that He is always in control, regardless of how chaotic or dire our situation may seem.

⇒ *What verses could we memorize this week to help us remember God's power and sovereignty?*

2. HEART: God's favor is a magnificent gift, and His grace continually surrounds us. His hand is in everything for our good. There is no such thing as luck. His providence rules. As we allow this reality to root deeply into our hearts, God's promised peace can bloom in our lives (Philippians 4:7).

⇒ *How might a better grasp of God's favor and providence affect your peace?*

3. HANDS: God bestowed favor on Esther with His purposes in mind. God granted her great influence so she could save not only her own life but also the lives of many.

⇒ *How will you honor God with the influence He has given you "for such a time as this"?*

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