

Purim – The Story of Mordecai

Esther – Queen of Persia, intercessor for the Jews before the King, and the one for whom [the book of Esther](#) is written. Understandably, as the heroine of the story, most discussions of the book are meant to inspire people to emulate her.

But how many people are going to get the chance to be a queen, or be in a position to intercede for their people in front of a king? Re-reading the story this year, I realized Mordecai's role in the whole affair is probably a more realistic picture of what people in any position could aspire to.

Mordecai the Jew

[Mordecai](#) was just one man in the vast Persian empire. He was part of the group of Jews who were brought to Persia against their will. Although they had made a pretty good life for themselves by this time, Mordecai was a working man living in a culture, and under the rule of a king who didn't share his convictions -- not unlike most of us today. He's sometimes the unsung hero of the story.

Always Doing the Right Thing

The first thing you can see about him is he was responsible, always doing the right thing. When Esther's parents died, [he adopted her](#). He was one of probably many relatives. He wouldn't have had to adopt her. He could've just taken her in or even let someone else take her in. But Mordecai did the right thing completely. Then, when Esther was in the King's harem, before she was queen, Mordecai would come as close as he could to [try to see her](#) and find out about her welfare. It's obvious that he was devoted to her as much as he was to his own natural children.

Devoted to God Alone

He was also devoted to God regardless of the consequences. It was actually his devotion to God that started the fight with Haman. When Haman put out the [decree](#) that everyone in the King's service had to bow to him, Mordecai didn't bow. Others in charge reprimanded him repeatedly about it to no avail. Even after Haman put out the decree to kill the Jews because of Mordecai's defiance, Mordecai still didn't bow to him. He was devoted to God alone and nothing would make him compromise that. Not only that, but he told them it was because He was Jewish. He never shrank back from his faith or his identity.

Torah Observant

It's easy to assume that because the Jews turned away from the Torah and taken into captivity by the

Babylonians, that they were still not following the Torah while in Persia. This particular group of Jews had not returned to Jerusalem with the other Jews who went back with [Zerubbabal](#). But this story shows us a different reality. As Haman himself stated, they were following [different laws](#). The fact that Haman's [decree](#) to exterminate the Jews had to be distributed across the whole empire, is evidence that Jews everywhere were practicing Torah.

Haman's wife also confirms that the Jews in Persia had a reputation of being a formidable force, when [she told Haman](#), "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is a Jew, you will not get the better of him; on the contrary, your downfall before him is certain." Many of the [Persian people ended up coming to faith in YHWH](#) because of the reputation God had given them. Mordecai had a reputation just by being a Jew.

A Faithful Realist

Another thing you can see about Mordecai is that he's a realist. His faith is without question, but when the decree to destroy the Jews came out, [he was devastated](#). He tore his clothes, he put on sackcloth and ashes, he walked the streets crying and wailing. I can only imagine that part of his anguish was that he felt let down by God. He had kept God's law and his allegiance to God by not bowing to Haman. Now, for that reason, all Jews would die horrible deaths. How could God let this happen? He had done the right thing, and terrible consequences resulted.

We see that although His faith was unwavering, he wasn't so "holy" that he just accepted everything that happened as God's will and just left it to God to take care of. Nor was he one who would turn his back on God because of this terrible consequence of serving Him. I'd call Mordecai a faithful realist – He believed the Jews were going to die and was heartbroken about it, he pleaded with God to save them and watched for an opportunity to participate in a miracle.

Faith Stronger Than Fear

Well, of course, God hadn't let him down; God just had bigger plans in mind than he realized. He then gets word to Queen Esther, "...if you fail to speak up now, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from a different direction..." With [this statement](#), we see that his faith in God had prevailed, even though nothing about the situation had changed. No matter what the circumstances, including his own feelings of grief and despair, his faith was stronger than his fear -- so strong, it compelled him to act on God's leading.

The next time Mordecai came before Haman. He [again refuses to bow](#), despite all that's now transpired. That's when Haman [makes a gallows](#) to hang Mordecai on. It's Mordecai's unwillingness to compromise on his convictions that God used to stir up Haman's pride, which ends up [snaring Haman in his own trap](#).

Humble & Thankful

Once Haman was gone, Mordecai's reputation quickly spread beyond the Jewish people. He went on to being [second in command](#) to the King, but he always kept his humility and faith in God. The [festival](#) he established was a memorial of Thanksgiving to God that has all Jews (and others) thanking God for centuries afterward. In fact the festival was called [the Day of Mordecai](#) up until the second century when the name was changed to Purim.

An Advocate for Others

Throughout his career in the King's service, Mordecai continued pursuing [projects and initiatives](#) that benefitted the Jewish people and everyone in Persia.

This would have been very unusual for most men in his position. Normally they would pursue more power, more honor and benefitting themselves and their friends. Haman would have been typical. But not Mordecai. Even in his high position, he never lost touch with the citizens and their concerns. He always kept their needs in mind and brought proposals to the king to improve their lives.

One Righteous Man

The story is an example of how one ordinary, but righteous man, unwilling to bow to cultural or religious expectations can turn a whole kingdom for God's purposes. Mordecai's steadfastness is what drove Haman to such evil and gave God the opportunity to show His power and destroy the enemy. Many were brought to YHWH because of Mordecai's example.

I can see that Esther's role was interceding for the people before the king, similar to what [Yeshua does for us](#). But Mordecai always did the right thing, stood his ground, let his faith in God compel him, and trusted God for what was humanly impossible – that's our role.