

# MENTOR



# FOR LIFE

## THE NEXT TEST

Babe Ruth said, "It's hard to beat a person who never gives up." There's always another struggle, another challenge, around the corner. Even when you win, there's a game next week. You only have time to celebrate any victory for so long before you have to prepare for the next test.

Last Week, Esther struck a deathblow to the evil Haman. Like an action movie, the villain is gone, but the countdown timer on the bomb is still ticking. Haman's edict was still in effect. The days were counting down until people had free reign to slaughter the Jews and plunder their possessions. The worst part, the timer couldn't be stopped.

Esther had secured safety for herself and Mordecai. However, that wasn't enough. Her burden extended beyond herself and her own comfort and safety. They might not be able to stop the attack, but as they say, "the best defense is a good offense."

### ESTHER 8:1–11 (SELECTED)

<sup>1</sup> On that day King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her. <sup>2</sup> And the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

<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>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."

<sup>(10)</sup> ... 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.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*"Look at where we at. Yeah, I've been drowning, I've been asking why would God allow this? If we were never lost then we will never know what found is."*

Have we seen God do miracles in the book of *Esther*? Technically, no. A miracle is a unique occurrence where God breaks the laws of nature. However, sometimes God's providential hand (using natural means) seems so powerful, it feels miraculous. Scan the QR code to worship.



## DISCUSSION

What's a movie or story that had you on the edge of your seat?

1. To whom was Haman's property given, and to whom was it entrusted? (1-2)

2. What reason is given that Haman's previous edict couldn't be revoked? (8)

3. What indicators were used to show in whose authority the edict was distributed? (8,10)

4. What response did Mordecai's edict allow? (11)

5. What two potential advantages did Mordecai's edict provide...

-for Jewish defense?

-for Persian deterrence?

6. How has this study challenged you to lean on mentors in seasons of uncertainty? What advantages does a good mentor offer?

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

What are you risking and who are you risking it for? Would you be willing to stake your reputation and future opportunities for Christ? If you have questions, talk to your Coach today!

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## STUDY NOTES LEAST WORST

In 1979, Iranian revolutionaries stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran taking hostages. Six Americans escaped the embassy and found themselves holed up in the Canadian Ambassador's home for two months.

CIA agent, Tony Mendez, and his team hatched a wild stunt to get the six Americans out of Iran. They created a fake movie, flew to Iran to scout locations, and then snuck the six Americans out as film executives and crew. The fake film was a sci-fi epic called "Argo."

The 2012 movie, *Argo*, based on Mendez's book, captured this story. In the movie, Mendez presents their idea to his superior, "There are only bad options. It's about finding the best one." Their authority questioned, "You don't have a *better* bad idea than this?" Mendez' assistant confirmed, "This is the *best* bad idea we have, sir...by far." Thankfully, the mission succeeded.

Sometimes circumstances have no great options—sometimes no good options either. That's Esther's situation. Haman's evil plot left no "clean" options. The least worst solution leaves us scratching our heads like, "Is this even OK morally?" This is an account of *what* happened, not necessarily an example to follow.

## MENTEES MUST OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Haman died on the gallows he set up for Mordecai. ***On that day King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her. And the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.*** The ironic victory of Mordecai the Jew over the evil Haman extended even to the wealth he left behind. Haman hated Mordecai for not bending his knee, but now his legacy was over.

Esther had secured safety for herself and Mordecai. We must note her dedication as she ***again*** went ***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.***

This was no risk-free action. Xerxes had already done so much for Esther and Mordecai. What if he became frustrated at an even greater ask? Esther could have lost her privilege if not her life. In fact, the king began reminding his young queen of all that he had already done, ***"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."***

Thankfully, the king went on, ***"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."*** Notice what the king just said, the first law issued for Haman had to stay in effect—it could not change. The king granted his authority to Esther and Mordecai to craft a new law. The new law didn't eliminate the first, but overcame it with another law.

So, Mordecai issued orders from the king, using 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, saying that the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives.***

## OVERCOMING MAY REQUIRE CREATIVITY

Upon hearing that Haman's edict couldn't be undone, many of us would likely throw our hands in the air and give up. Esther and Mordecai couldn't undo Haman's genocidal edict, so they wrote one where the Jews could kill their attacker's right back—with the same legacy-ending force as Haman's plan including the option to plunder their wealth!

Combined, the two edicts legalized large scale violence, which is bad. But, it's the least worst option. Hopefully, it would cause the Persians to think twice before attacking.

To put these events in chronological context, two months and ten days will elapse between Haman's original edict (3:7) and this Week's final edict (8:9). After all that time, the Jews had an option to escape genocide, but the battle still lay before them.

As mentees, many times we encounter obstacles that we can't see around—we didn't make varsity, we didn't get into the college we wanted, the girl or guy of my dreams is dating someone else. A good mentor can show you the obstacles are really just opportunities in disguise. We're never faced with a truly binary choice of this or that. There's always a third way; an opportunity we might not have the perspective to see just yet.

Sometimes, though, God just says "no" to our plans. Things seem so out of our control. A mentor of mine told me that those are the best opportunities to lean into because that's when God's at work. When he gives us no options, no control, nothing to steward, then that's a great opportunity to leave it all up to him—because we kind of have to. In those time, mentors are there to encourage you in the waiting. They're a lifeline in your helplessness.