

## A word-search puzzle from the Bible Pages. Theme: The book of Esther.

A version with larger text on A4-printers is found at the address [www.biblepages.net/npa010.htm#12](http://www.biblepages.net/npa010.htm#12)

63 words are hidden in this puzzle. They are printed across, or up or down, or diagonally, backwards or forwards, but always in a straight line, with no letters skipped. Each letter may form a part of more than one word. All letters do not belong to words, and there is no "hidden message".



List of words (regarding why these words were selected, see pages 2 and 3): ADAR, AHASUERUS, ANGER, APPAREL, BANQUET, BEAUTIFUL, BIGTHAN, CHRONICLES, COMMANDMENT, CROWN, CUBITS, DECREE, DELIVERANCE, DESTROY, ENEMY, ESTHER, FASTING, FAVOUR, FEASTING, FIFTEENTH, FIFTY, FOURTEENTH, GALLOWS, GARDEN, GLADNESS, HADASSAH, HAMAN, HONOUR, HORSEBACK, JEWS, KING, LETTERS, MEDES, MORDECAI, MOURNING, NISAN, OBTAINED, PALACE, PEOPLE, PERSIANS, PETITION, PLEASED, PUBLISHED, PURIM, QUEEN, REFUSED, REMEMBERED, REVERSE, RING, ROYAL, SCEPTRE, SEALED, SHUSHAN, SILVER, TERESH, THIRTEENTH, TREASURIES, VASHTI, WAILING, WEEPING, WICKED, WRATH, WRITTEN

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**Some notes on the selection of words in this puzzle.** (In the following, the first occurrence of the words that appear in the maze on page 1, is highlighted in **bold** style.)

The words in the puzzle on page 1 are taken from the book of **Esther** in the Old Testament. There, chapter 1 records that **king Ahasuerus** of Persia had a long feast, in his **palace** in the town **Shushan**. During that feast, he sent for the **queen, Vashti**, to come to the feast. But, she **refused**, and so, the king was “very wroth, and his **anger** burned in him”. His advisers told him, Esther 1:19, “If it please the king, let there go a **royal commandment** from him, and let it be **written** among the laws of the **Persians** and the **Medes**, that it be not altered, that Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.”

In the palace, there was a Jew by the name **Mordecai**. He brought forth his cousin (his uncle’s daughter) **Hadassah** (also called Esther), who was **beautiful**. 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 warned the king through queen Esther that two of the chamberlains, **Bigthan** and **Teresh**, planned to kill the king. Those men were hanged, and the matter was recorded “in the book of the **chronicles** before the king”.

Esther 3:1-2, “After these things did king Ahasuerus promote **Haman** the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. And all the king’s servants, that were in the king’s gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.”

Esther 3:5, “And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of **wrath**.” He schemed to have all of Mordecai’s **people** (the **Jews**) in Ahasuerus’ kingdom to be killed. The king (who apparently did not know that queen Esther was a Jewess), gave Haman a permission to go ahead with his murderous plans. (Esther 3:9 records that Haman said to the king, “If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of **silver** to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king’s **treasuries**.”)

Esther 3:7, as VW-2006 has it: “In the first month, which is the month **Nisan**, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, the lot), before Haman from day to day and month to month, until it fell on the twelfth month, the month of **Adar**.” (Thence, the word **purim**, “lots”.)

And so, as Esther 3:12-12 records, the order of destruction which Haman had devised, was sent in **letters** which were **sealed** with the king’s **ring**, to his lieutenants, governors, rulers and all people, in the name of king Ahasuerus. It was ordered that on the **thirteenth** day of the twelfth month (Adar), they were to **destroy**, kill and cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old.

When that coming slaughter came to be known among the Jews, “there was great **mourning** among the Jews, and **fasting** and **weeping** and **wailing**, and many lay in sackcloth and ashes” (Esther 4:3).

Mordecai sent a message to Esther, requesting that she would plead for her people, before the king. But, it was forbidden, at the threat of death, for people to approach the king, without having been called. It was only if the king held out his **sceptre**, that the intruder could be saved alive. This applied even to the queen. Esther took the risk, and so, she put on her royal **apparel** and went to the inner court of the king’s house. When the king saw her, “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 did not directly request the king to save her people. She had devised a plan. When the king asked what her request was, she said to him, “If it seem good to the king, let the king and Haman come this day to the **banquet** that I have prepared for him.” (Esther 5:4).

Esther 5:5-8, “So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. And the king said to Esther at the banquet of wine, What is your **petition**? and it shall be granted you: and what is your request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed. Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request is; If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to morrow as the king has said.”

Haman left that first banquet with a glad heart, but when he went out through the gate, Mordecai who was sitting there, did not stand up and bow to him. Haman was enraged. He told about those things to his wife and his friends. One of them, by the name Zeresh, told Haman to let a **gallows** be made, **fifty cubits** high, and the next day ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it. “And the thing **pleased** Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made”, Esther 5:14.

As it happened, that night the king could not sleep, “and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king’s chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the king said, What **honour** and dignity has been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king’s servants that ministered to him, There is nothing done for him.” (Esther 6:1-3).

Right at that time, Haman came to see the king, in order to request that Mordecai should be hanged on the gallows. But, before Haman could do that, the king asked how he could honour a man. Haman, thinking that he was the one to be honoured, said, “Let the royal apparel be brought which the king uses to wear, and the horse that the king rides on, and the royal crown which is set on his head, and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that they may array the man with whom the king delights to honour, and bring him on **horseback** through the street of the city” (Esther 6:7-9). So, the king ordered Haman to do this to Mordecai.

Then came the second banquet which Esther had prepared for the king and Haman. There, the king again asked Esther what her petition was. She said to him, “Let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request, for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the **enemy** could not countervail the king’s damage.” The king asked her who had planned to do so. Esther said, “The adversary and enemy is this **wicked** Haman.” The king was enraged and went into the palace **garden**. One of the chamberlains told him about the gallows which Haman had built for Mordecai. The king told him to hang Haman on it.

The king had taken his ring (seal) from Haman and gave it to Mordecai. However, the laws of that country could not be **reversed**, and so, the earlier **decree** regarding the destruction of the Jews, which had been sealed with the king’s ring and then sent out, was still valid. But, the king told Mordecai to write a new decree, in the king’s name. In it, it was stated that the king granted the Jews in every town to protect themselves and to destroy and cause to perish all those who would assault them. That order was immediately dispatched to the different parts of the kingdom and **published** there. Thus, there was **deliverance** for the Jews, see Esther 9.

Esther 9:17-18 records that on the thirteenth day of the month Adar, and on the **fourteenth**, the Jews assembled together. On the **fifteenth** day of that month, they rested, and made it a day of **feasting** and **gladness**.

The Jews decided that the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> days of the month Adar should be **remembered** (kept) annually. Those days were called *purim*, apparently in reference to the event recorded in Esther 3:7 which was quoted earlier.

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