

STUDY GUIDE
about the Book
of Esther

Now The
Saints
Possess
The
Kingdom



Gary Hargrave



The Jews Reverse the Decree Against Them

We know that the book of Esther is a story about the Jewish people and their experience throughout history. But as Christian believers we are grafted into that story. As much as it is a story of Israel's deliverance, it is also reflective of how our deliverance in God through Christ will work in our generation. In Esther's generation there was a great deliverance, which we celebrate at the Feast of Purim. This deliverance happened through Esther's boldness in response to a king's decree.

Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder. (Esther 3:13)

This order to destroy, kill, and annihilate the Jewish people was given by King Ahasuerus at the urging of Haman (Esther 3:8-9). And we know from the story that Esther went before the king without being summoned, even though she knew she could be killed for doing so, and she interceded for her people (Esther 4:11, 5:2, 7:1-6). The result was that Haman was killed (Esther 7:10). However, there was still a problem, as we read in Esther chapter 8.

Then she said, "If it pleases the king and if I have found favor before him and the matter seems proper to the king and I am pleasing in his sight, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces. For how can I endure to see the calamity which will befall my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?" So King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Behold, I have given the house of Haman to Esther,

and him they have hanged on the gallows because he had stretched out his hands against the Jews. Now you write to the Jews as you see fit, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's signet ring may not be revoked." (Esther 8:5-8)

Even though Haman was killed, the decree of death still existed. Therefore, Esther's plea, her supplication to the king, was that he revoke that decree. The king's response was, "I cannot stop that decree. It was written and signed. There needs to be another decree." So the king's scribes were summoned and wrote according to all that Mordecai commanded.

He wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horses, riding on steeds sired by the royal stud. In them the king granted the Jews who were in each and every city the right to assemble and to defend their lives, to destroy, to kill and to annihilate the entire army of any people or province which might attack them, including children and women, and to plunder their spoil. (Esther 8:10-11)

The king did not stop what was happening by virtue of the original decree. Instead, he gave the Jewish people authority to rise up and fight their enemies. It was the Jewish people who reversed the decree by destroying those who were set to destroy them.



We Live Under a Decree of Death

What Esther faced is the truth that we live in. Because of sin, because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, because of the flesh nature that exists in us, the decree of judgment for the death of the human race cannot be removed in and of itself. That is why God had to send His Son Yeshua (Jesus) to suffer and die and take the judgment in our place. In dying on our behalf, Yeshua defeated satan on the cross. Yet even though satan is a defeated foe, we find his plan of destruction is still being enacted on the earth.

The fact that satan is judged does not stop his plan. Even though his plan is false because it has been reversed and satisfied in Christ, satan will still try to find the leverage to destroy you. In Esther's day the Jews had to rise up and destroy those who planned to carry out the decree that they should be annihilated and that their property should be confiscated (Esther 3:13, 9:5). Today the Body of Christ must rise up in the strength of the blood of Yeshua and throw off of us these same kinds of decrees that satan and his hoards seek to carry out against us.



Be Bold

Therefore, we must be bold, just as Esther was bold, to enter the King's presence. What was the basis for Esther's boldness? She knew she could die if she went before the king, but Mordecai had told her, "Look, we're all dead anyway by this decree. You might as well go. You don't know if the king will receive you, but that is the only chance we have to stop this decree." So Esther said, "If I perish, I perish," and she successfully pleaded with the king for a complete reversal of Haman's plot (Esther 4:13-16).

Esther said to the king, "How can I endure to see the calamity which will befall my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?" (Esther 8:6). And how can we as the Body of Christ endure to watch the destruction of this age? How can we allow the annihilation of nations and peoples under the reign of satan? We should have an even greater boldness because we know we have the blood of Christ that makes us acceptable to the Father. We know He will receive us into His presence if our hearts are humble and we are covered by the blood of the Lamb. We can appropriate by faith this positioning so that we enter boldly before the throne of grace to make our request (Hebrews 4:16).

If Esther and the Jews had been fearful and not acted, the decree against them would have been finalized. They would have been executed and annihilated. It must be real to us today as Christians that satan is set to destroy us, and there is only one way that destruction works: it works through our passivity and our fearfulness. If we sit and do nothing, make no mistake, satan's plot against us will be completed. The Jews rose up and reversed the decree until it landed on the heads of those who were committed to their destruction. Likewise, there must be a reversing of the decree onto the principalities and powers, the spiritual forces of wickedness that are committed to destroying us (Ephesians 6:12).



The Saints Execute the Judgments Written

When we celebrate Purim, we celebrate the day that the king's decree was executed. But instead of their enemies executing the decree, God's people executed it. This is a story that reflects very much what is to occur in the end-time. The saints of God are to execute the judgment written (Psalm 149:9). But when most people teach about the book of Revelation, the book of Daniel, and the things Yeshua said about tribulation, the focus always seems to be on the terrible events and frightening manifestations of demonic power.

People are very quick to explain their interpretation of the symbolism: "This is who the false prophet is. This is what the beast is and what his number means. This is what the horns mean." As they delve deeper into all these evil things that satan is doing, you begin to feel like you are watching a horror movie. And the more they talk, the more you are saying, "Get me out of here!" It creates fear. You think, "Oh no! How do I face the dragon and the anti-Christ, and the false prophet doing miracles? How do I face all that?" I want to look to the book of Daniel to help answer that question. First of all, Daniel saw the fearful things as well.

“The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, ‘Arise, devour much meat!’ After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.” (Daniel 7:4–7)



Keep Looking

Daniel saw one frightening beast after another, but he kept looking. He was looking for something else. Is there something more to see? What is God doing in all of this?

“I kept looking
Until thrones were set up,
And the Ancient of Days took His seat;
His vesture was like white snow
And the hair of His head like pure wool.
His throne was ablaze with flames,
Its wheels were a burning fire.
A river of fire was flowing
And coming out from before Him;

Thousands upon thousands were attending Him,
And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him.” (Daniel 7:9–10)

Are you looking at the scary beasts until you feel intimidated? Then be like Daniel and keep looking. Look past that. Look past your fear. Look past your reservations until you see the throne and the One who is sitting on the throne. Put yourself there. This is the reality of the heavenly places.

“I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.
And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and men of every language
Might serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13–14)

This is Yeshua ascending from the earth, having been resurrected and coming up to the right hand of God to live in His presence. There is no way that satan or his angels can win. Their dominion is already removed because Yeshua the Lord has been given the dominion.



Victory

Judgment Was Passed in Favor of the Saints

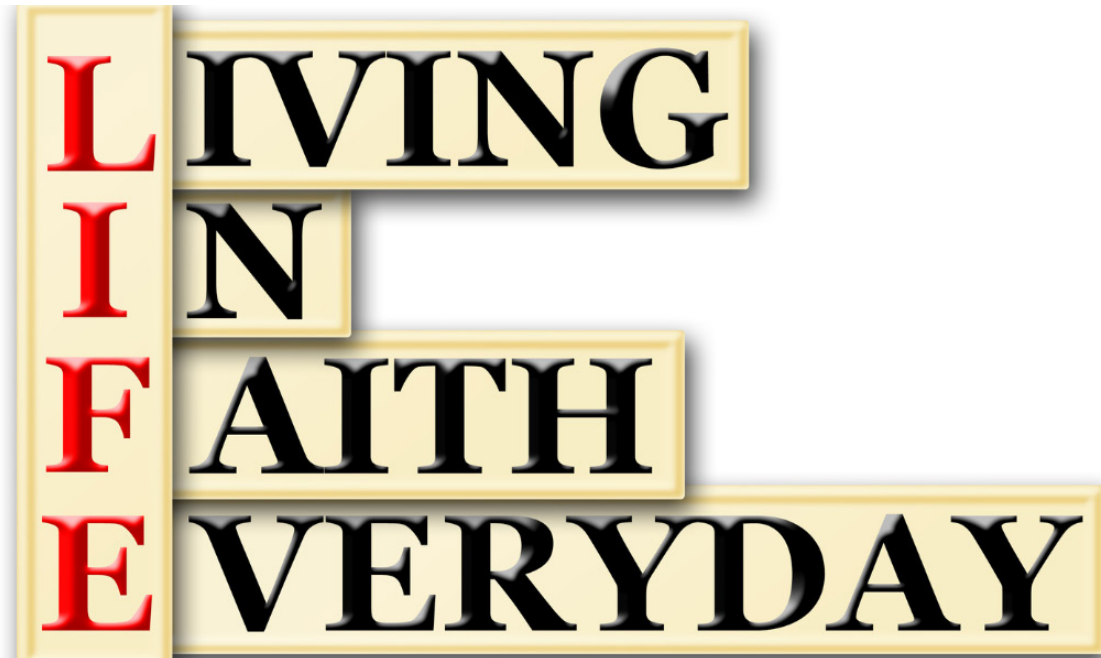
You can keep looking for the beasts and expect that things will get worse and worse and worse. But the view from heaven shows a different picture. Are you getting that picture? Are you still looking? What will you behold during this time?

“I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.” (Daniel 7:21–22)

You could read that and say, “Oh no! There is a war against the saints, and we’re being overpowered. Now that makes me afraid.” Well, Satan has already overpowered the Church for two thousand years. He has been at war with the saints ever since he was cast down to the earth when Yeshua was resurrected and ascended to the throne of God (Revelation 12:5–9). It seems like we entered a dark age, and the authority, anointing, and power of the Church is gone. It seems like we have lost the battle. Stop looking at that. That was yesterday. The saints were being overpowered only for a time until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed. Judgment has already been passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One. That happened at the cross of Christ. We need to get that into our hearts and into our heads. We need to stop waiting for something to happen when it has already happened. There is a timeframe between the victory on the cross and the possession of the Kingdom, and during that time it has appeared that we are losing. It seems like we are worn down, worn out, and overpowered (Daniel 7:25). But the moment comes when we possess the Kingdom.

At Purim we celebrate the moment in which judgment by the authority of the king was handed over to Esther and Mordecai. But the king did not execute that judgment; they did. Stop looking for God to do it in the future. He has already given you the ring. He has already given you the authority. The King has done all that He can do. Judgment has been passed in our favor. He has given us dominion and granted us the Kingdom. Are you still asking, “How do I interpret all of these beasts and governments and manifestations?” Why do you want to learn

so much about what is passing away? It is going to be useless knowledge. The important thing to know is the picture in heaven. God has introduced you to the myriads of those in heaven, to the thousands upon thousands that attend the King. It is according to that vision, that power, that dominion, those myriads that we say, “Your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

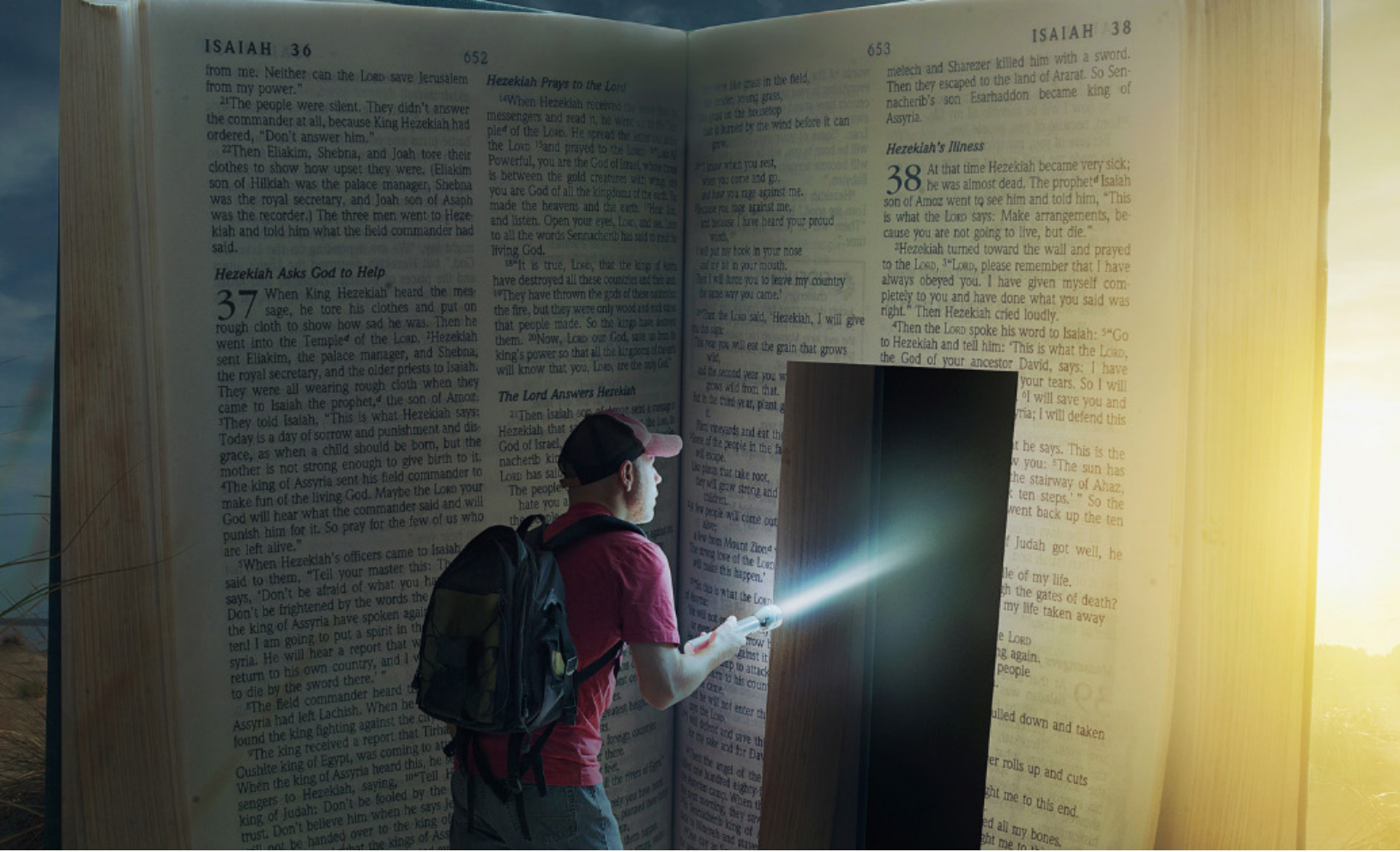


More Are with Us Than with the Enemy

Iwant to read one more Scripture. This is about a time when Elisha was surrounded by a great army and faced destruction.

Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” So he answered, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” Then Elisha prayed and said, “O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” And the LORD opened the servant’s eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kings 6:15–17)

Let this be real to your heart: those that are for us are greater and mightier than anything that is against us (1 John 4:4). As He did with Elisha’s servant, the Lord must open your eyes. You must see the vision of the truth that surrounds you and what the reality is in this day. If you do not, a fear can creep in and take control of your spirit, and you can find yourself withdrawing from what God is setting before you. Yeshua did not judge by what His eyes saw, or His ears heard (Isaiah 11:3). He had another way of walking with the Father. And as we walk in these days, it is necessary to walk according to a vision of the realm of spirit and an understanding from the realm of spirit.



The Kingdom Is Yours. Possess It.

Maybe we are living in the end-time. Maybe we are living in the days of tribulation. But that is not our focus. Our focus is on the Father. Come into the throne room of the Father and let that be more real to you than anything around you. You will always feel overwhelmed on a natural realm, but I am telling you the truth before God that there is always far more going for you than for the enemy. If satan's forces seem to have power, remember that Christ has all authority. Authority outweighs power. Authority creates power. Authority removes power. God has given all power and all authority to Christ (Ephesians 1:20–22). He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). And even if a dragon appears and threatens you, you will not be shaken because your reality is in the realm of the Lord's dominion which is everlasting. And His Kingdom cannot be destroyed.

Get over your fear of the Great Tribulation. Get over any fear of the end-time because you are going to win. You do not need to know all the gory details of what satan is doing. Why focus on that? We are getting rid of him. Let there be something in our spirits that drives us into the realm of spirit, into the presence of the Father, to deal with the reality of the age we live in. God has not put us on the earth at this time to fail. He has not made us a part of this generation to simply live our lives in ease without any sense of urgency as though this age will go on forever. We live in the day of the culmination of all things, and we must live effectively in this age. Ridding the earth of satan will happen when the holy ones, the saints of God, are the executors of the final release. The Kingdom is ours. Now we possess it.



For Further Study

2 Kings 6:8–23. “Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.”

Psalms 149:1–9. “To execute on them the judgment written; this is an honor for all His godly ones.”

Daniel 7:25–27. “Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One.”

Matthew 24:22. “Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.”

Romans 16:20. “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.”

Revelation 4:1—5:5. “Behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.”

Revelation 5:8–14. “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

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All Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible 1995 (NASB1995).

ABOUT GARY HARGRAVE



GARY HARGRAVE has a passion for leading people into spiritual maturity. Gary effectively ministers the life-changing truth of God's Word through Bible teaching and prophetic revelation that emphasizes the Lordship of Christ.

Gary embraces the teachings and insights of the Hebrew Scriptures as the essential foundation of God's Kingdom and the roots of Christian faith.

By cultivating spiritual maturity in Christians, Gary is deeply committed to teaching and inspiring unity in the Body of Christ and between Christians and the Jewish people.

Throughout decades of ministry, Gary has worked closely with leaders in the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant communities to build relationships based on commonality and understanding. He frequently leads study tours to Israel in the land of the Bible.

Gary is the host of a weekly podcast entitled *Growing In God* and is the founder of Shiloh University, an accredited online Bible college and seminary.

Gary and his family reside in Hawaii.

For other insightful resources by Gary Hargrave, including podcasts, books, articles, videos, and other educational materials, please visit: www.HargraveMinistries.org.

ABOUT HARGRAVE MINISTRIES

The calling of the Lord upon this ministry is to lead people into spiritual maturity by revealing biblical truth. **Our passion is to see the Kingdom of God manifest on earth** as the Body of Christ grows in unity, power, and love.

Everything we do flows from the revelation of the Jewish foundations of our Christian faith. It is our desire and privilege to bless the land and people of Israel. Our Israel outreach includes our ability to:

- **Feed the poor and break the cycle of poverty in Israel**
- **Support the orphans and widows of fallen Israeli soldiers**
- Provide physical and emotional care to **child victims of terrorism**
- **Build bridges between Christians and Jews with biblical study and research**
- Support archaeology and preservation of the **biblical City of David**
- Provide 24/7 **care for Holocaust survivors**
- **Help persecuted Jews around the world return to Israel and start new lives**
- Plant trees to **reforest Israel** and help create **"The Gospel Trail"** between Nazareth and Capernaum

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