

Leading Ladies

Oct 2020



7 "Born to Rule" *Esther's Story*

Godless Books?

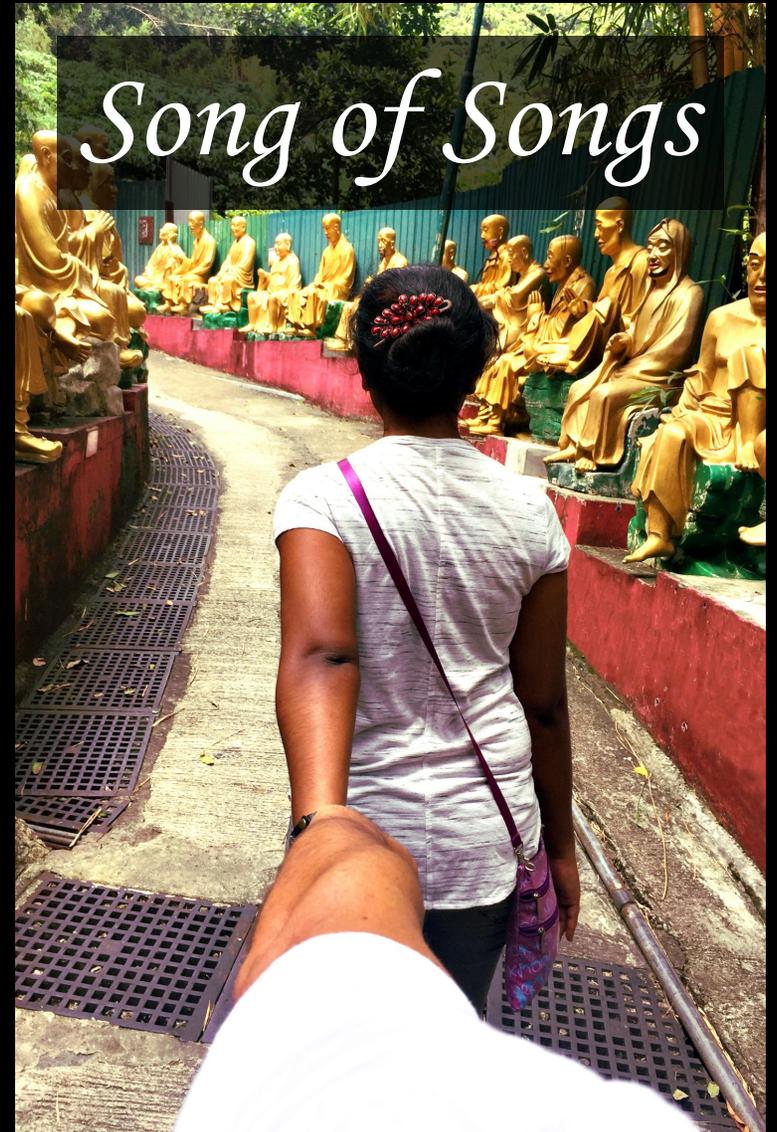
Books of Esther & Song of Songs do not mention God by name

But it's a mistake to equate them

Only one is devoid of God

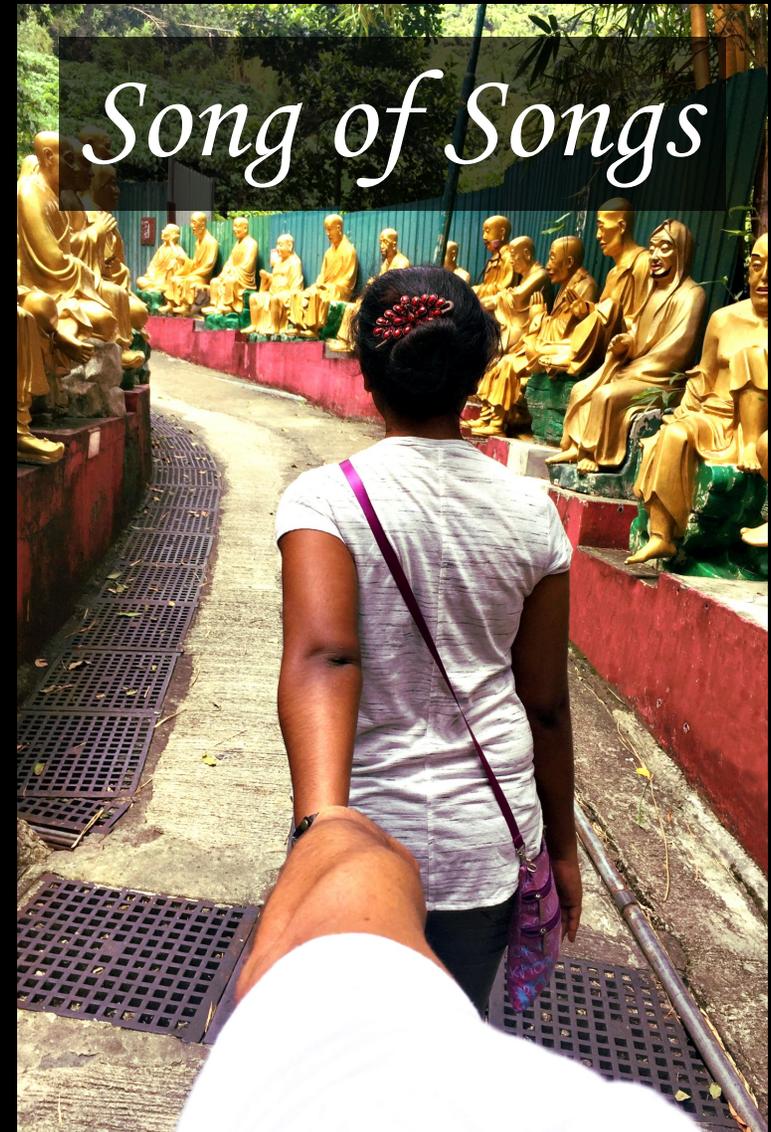


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No God in the Song

- No mention of God (Jahweh)
(c.f. **Song 8:6**)
- Only God mentioned is Baal!
Song 8:11
- Love is expressed only in terms
of physical & sexual desire, not
as an attribute of God
- Oaths are sworn in the names
of the animals **Song 2:7; 3:5; 8:4**
=> no God



God in the Book of Esther

Salvation of the Jews

Book of **Esther** evidences both faith in God and godly attributes

Compassion	Mordecai adopts Esther	2:7
Protection	Mordecai helps Esther hide her nationality	2:10
Courage	Mordecai refuses to bow to Haman	3:2
Empathy	Mordecai pleads for God's people	4:14
Faith in God	Esther directs a fast for her protection [must believe in God!]	4:16
Courageous Sacrifice	Esther risks her life to save her people [Role of Messiah]	5:1
Empathy	Esther pleads for God's people	7:3
Courage	Esther again risks her life to save her people	8:3
Protection	Esther requests a second day of Purim	9:13
Compassion	Mordecai legislates Purim for care of the poor	9:22

Chiasm



God in the Book of Esther

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Leading Lady, Queen Vashti

*the king was merry with wine, he commanded to bring Queen Vashti ...in order to show the peoples and the princes her beauty ...But Queen Vashti refused to come ...the king became enraged **Est 1:10-12***



*“The queen’s behavior will be made known to all women, causing them to look at their husbands with contempt ...let a royal order go out from him, ...that Vashti is never again to come before King Xerxes... let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she. So when the decree by the king is proclaimed ...all women will give honor to their husbands, high and low alike” **Est 1:17-20***

Xerxes' Insecurity

“Better” = More easily controlled

Ahasuerus (Xerxes) is
fearful of losing control

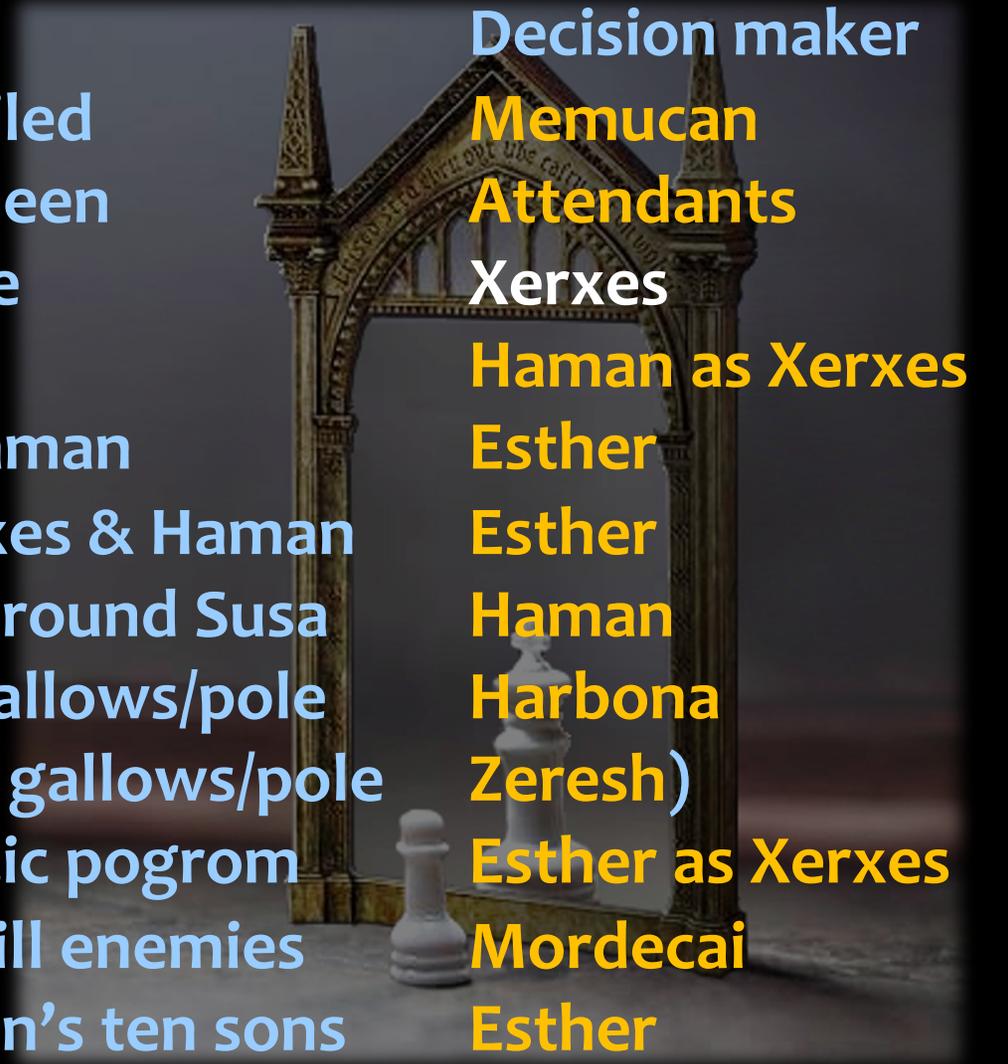
=> Esther = “Far Worse”!



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Decisions under Xerxes' Reign

	Decision	Decision maker
1:19	Vashti to be deposed & exiled	Memucan
2:2-4	Beauty contest for new queen	Attendants
3:1	Elevate Haman the Agagite	Xerxes
3:8	Destroy the Jews	Haman as Xerxes
5:4	A banquet for Xerxes & Haman	Esther
5:8	A second banquet for Xerxes & Haman	Esther
6:7-9	Parade the honored man around Susa	Haman
7:9	Hang Haman on his own gallows/pole (5:14 Haman to build the gallows/pole)	Harbona Zeresh
8:3	Cancel Haman's anti-Semitic pogrom	Esther as Xerxes
8:9	Grant Purim, for Jews to kill enemies	Mordecai
9:13	Further Purim; hang Haman's ten sons	Esther

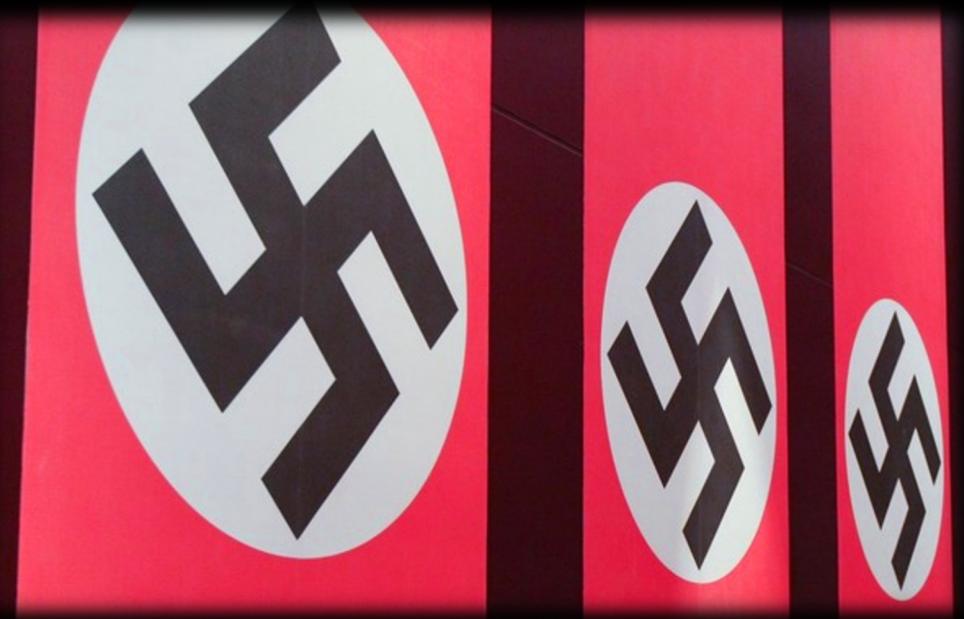


Haman the Agagite

*King Xerxes promoted Haman the Agagite... and advanced him and set his throne above all the officials who were with him. **Est 3:1***

*And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage. **Est 3:2***

*And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him, Haman was filled with fury... Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes. **Est 3:5-6***



Haman: Petty Hatred

Haman is not anti-Semitic per se

- Haman hates Mordecai
 - Mordecai is a Jew
- => Haman wants to destroy the Jews



Haman is narcissistic and petty, which provokes him to hate

Haman recounted to [his family] the splendor of his riches... all the promotions with which the king had honored him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and the servants of the king. “Even Queen Esther let no one but me come with the king to the feast she prepared...”

*“...Yet all this is worth nothing to me, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate.” **Est 5:11-13***

Esther: A Study in Courage

The Law

any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them

Faith in God

Esther: "Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do."

Courage & Sacrifice

Esther: "When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law.

- And if I perish, I perish."

God gives Victory

When [Xerxes] saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand.

Est 4:10-5:2

Esther: Unique Power

“What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.” **Est 7:2**



[Esther] fell at [the king's] 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. **Est 8:3**

“Behold... 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.” **Est 8:7-8**

This is an unprecedented level of power

Law of the Medes & Persians

*“the law of the Medes and Persians,
which cannot be repealed.”* **Dan 6:12**

*“no document written in the king’s name
and sealed with his ring can be revoked.”* **Est 8:7**



BABYLON

- 605 Nebuchadnezzar takes Daniel captive to Babylon
- 586 Nebuchadnezzar destroys Jerusalem
- 550 Belshazzar reigns in Babylon
- 539 Babylon falls to Cyrus of Medo-Persia

MEDIA & PERSIA

“Media & Persia”

*Dan 5:28; 6:8;
6:12; 6:15; 8:20*

“Persia & Media”

*Est 1:3; 1:14;
1:18; 1:19*

- 521 Darius the Mede reigns in Medo-Persia
Daniel in the Lions Den
- 486 Xerxes the Persian reigns in Medo-Persia (Esther)
- 474 Haman dictates anti-Semitic genocide pogrom

Law of the
Medes and Persians

Law of the Medes & Persians

Context: Officials of King Darius the Mede have caught Daniel praying to God, which they had outlawed with a death penalty

*“Did you not publish a decree that... anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions’ den?” The king answered, “The decree stands— **in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.**”*

*...“Daniel... pays no attention... **to the decree you put in writing.** He still prays three times a day.” When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.*

Dan 6:12-14



Law of the Medes & Persians

King Xerxes the Persian

*Then Haman said to King Xerxes, “If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy [the Jews]” ...the king said to Haman, “...do with the people as you please.” ...[the royal secretaries] **wrote out... all Haman’s orders... These were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring. Est 3:9-12***

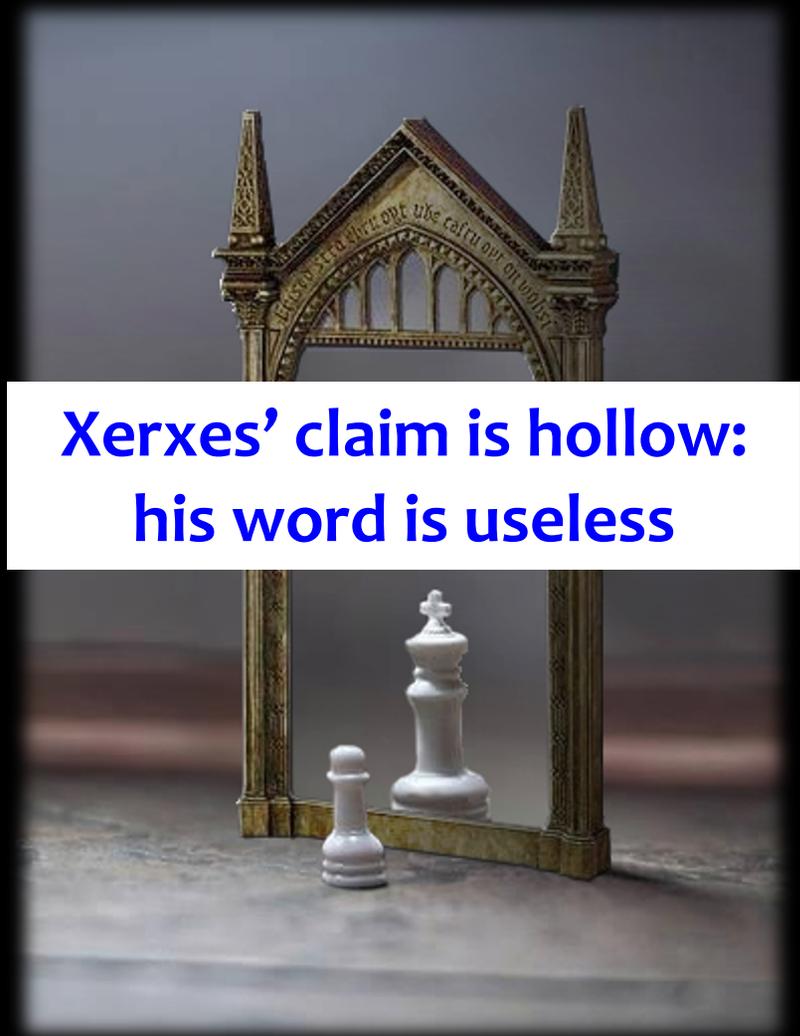


Law of the Medes & Persians

Queen Esther: Born to Rule

“If it pleases the king,” she said, “...let an order be written overruling the dispatches that Haman... devised and wrote to destroy the Jews” **Est 8:5**

*King Xerxes replied: “...write another decree in the king’s name in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king’s signet ring— for **no document written in the king’s name and sealed with his ring can be revoked.**”* **Est 8:7**



**Xerxes’ claim is hollow:
his word is useless**

**Esther repeals the Law of
the Medes & Persians**

Esther's Unique Authority

*“the law of the Medes and Persians,
which cannot be repealed.” Dan 6:12*

*“no document written in the king's name
and sealed with his ring can be revoked.” Est 8:7*

**Esther has repealed the law
which cannot be repealed**



Did the Laws co-exist?

No

Haman's Law: Let Jewish enemies kill Jews on 13 Adar

Esther's Law: Let Jews kill Jewish enemies on 13 Adar

The text specifies there was a repeal

*On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them. **Est 9:1***

=> Language of Esther's law consistent with repeal

*The king's edict granted the Jews... to destroy, kill and annihilate... their enemies. **Est 8:11***

=> Death count tells of an entirely one-sided slaughter

*The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them... In the citadel of Susa, the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men... in the king's provinces... They killed seventy-five thousand **Est 9:5-6,16***

Climax

Esther: *“For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated.”*

Xerxes:

“Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?”

Esther: *“A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!”* **Est 7:4-6**

Power transition complete: Esther supreme, Haman powerless

Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen. And the king arose in his wrath from the wine-drinking and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king. **Est 7:6-7**



Distraction: Haman's Fatal Offence

Xerxes exits; Haman falls onto Esther's couch, begging for his life

*And the king returned... as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. And the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the word left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face. **Est 7:8***

*So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated. **Est 7:10***



Xerxes' ego is offended; he is not concerned for Esther

Xerxes: The Self-Absorbed King

Xerxes only remembers slights against himself & forgets all else

1 Xerxes perceives a snub from Vashti and reacts with rage

*Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command delivered by the eunuchs. At this the king became enraged, and his anger burned within him. **Est 1:12***



Xerxes: The Self-Absorbed King

2 Mordecai saves Xerxes' life by exposing two assassins. Xerxes executes the assassins but forgets to thank Mordecai

The men were both hanged on the gallows. And it was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king. Est 2:23

Later, during a sleepless night, Xerxes reads the chronicles and his oversight is revealed

“What honor or distinction has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?” The king’s young men who attended him said, “Nothing has been done for him.” Est 6:3



Xerxes: The Self-Absorbed King

3 Esther risks her life to save the Jews

*And when the king saw Queen Esther... he held out to Esther the golden scepter... “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request.” **Est 7:3***

Xerxes is distracted by Haman’s offence
Esther has to start over, and risk her life again

*When the king held out the golden scepter to Esther... “If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight... let an order be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman ...which he wrote to destroy the Jews.” **Est 8:4-6***



Esther's Victory: Salvation of the Jews

Xerxes grants Mordecai's appeal for Purim

*the king allowed the Jews... 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 **Est 8:11***

*In Susa the citadel itself the Jews killed and destroyed 500 men, and also killed... the ten sons of Haman... but they laid no hand on the plunder **Est 9:6-10***

*the Jews who were in the king's provinces also gathered to defend their lives, and got relief from their enemies and killed 75,000 of those who hated them, but they laid no hands on the plunder. **Est 9:16***

The Greatness of Mordecai

*For Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Xerxes, and he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brothers, for he sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to all his people. **Est 10:3***



God's idea of greatness is one who speaks peace and cares for the poor

**But the book is a chiasm:
spiritual climax is in the centre**



Golden Scepter: Our Motivation from Esther's Courage

Esther approaches King Xerxes

King forbids approach by death

Est 4:11

Xerxes the king

Can be drunk & rage

Est 1:10-12

Self-absorbed & manipulable

Est 3:9-12

Punishes others when in fear

Est 1:17-20

Esther shows huge courage to approach the Throne of Xerxes

We approach King Jesus

King enables confident approach

Eph 3:12, Heb 4:16

Jesus the King

Calm, sober, humble, God-like

Isa 42:1-4

Judges impartially & righteously

Isa 11:3

Rules by justice & mercy

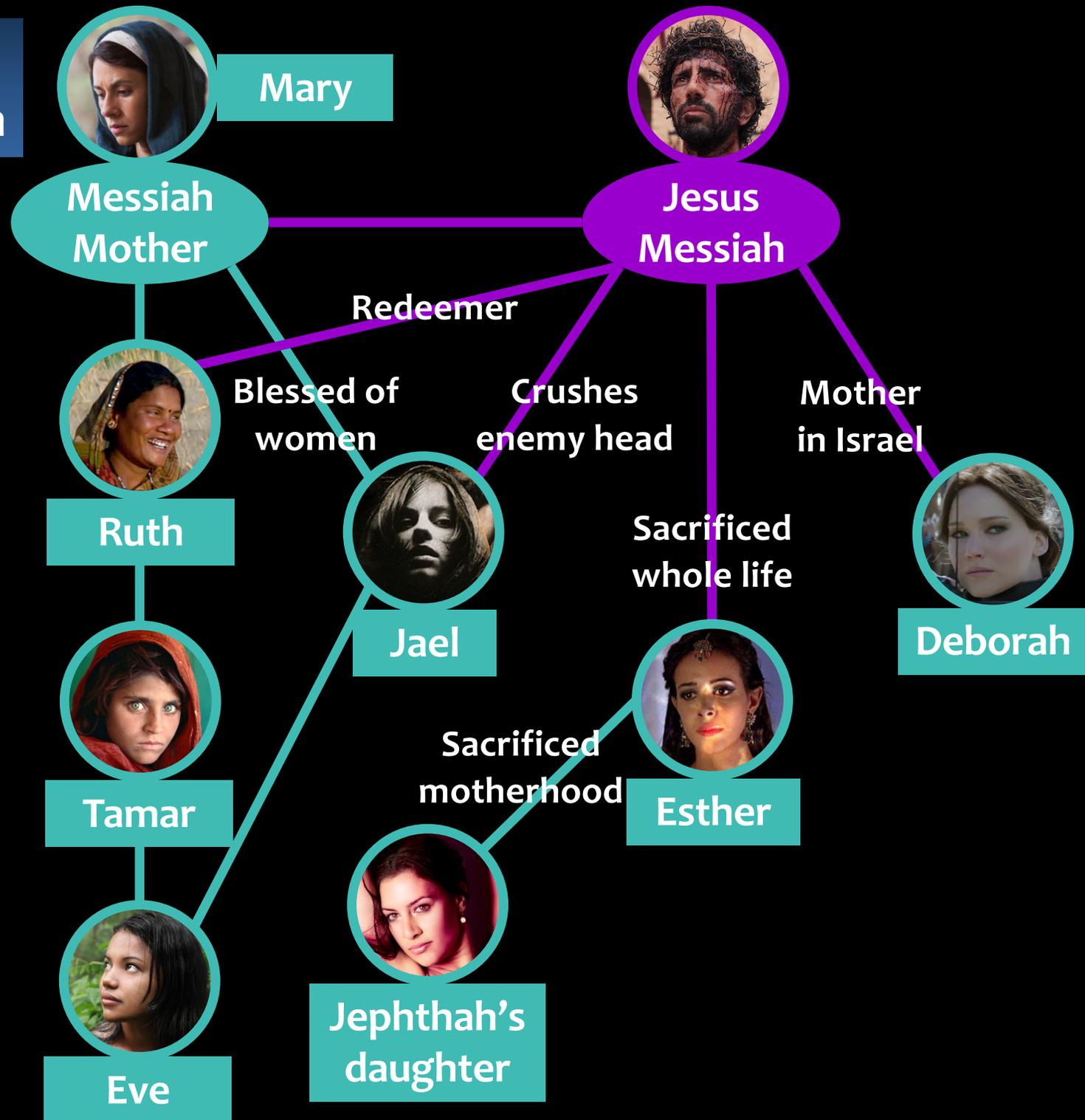
Isa 11:4

How can we be slow or afraid to approach the Throne of Christ?

A close-up photograph of a highly ornate golden crown. The crown features multiple tiers, intricate scrollwork, and is encrusted with numerous clear, red, and black gemstones. Atop the crown sits a cross with a small orb at its base. The crown is positioned on the right side of the frame, set against a rich, draped red fabric that fills the background. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic sheen and the facets of the jewels.

Esther's courage compels us to the Throne of Christ

Leading Ladies Mirroring Messiah



Leading Ladies Mirroring Messiah



Jesus
Messiah

Redeemer



Ruth

Joseph

Crushes
enemy head



Jael

David

Sacrificed
whole life



Esther

Moses

Mother
in Israel



Deborah

-

Prepared by
Divine Dream
Gen 37

Prepared by
Samuel's Anointing
1 Sam 16

Prepared by Angel
in Burning Bush
Ex 3