

### Handout: Comparison of Esther with King Saul

	Esther	Saul
Introduction of the main character	ה איש יהודי היה בשושן הבירה ושמו מרדכי בן יאיר בן-שמעי בן-קיש איש ימיני. ו אשר הגלה מירושלים עם-הגלה אשר הגלתה עם יכניה מלך-יהודה אשר הגלה נבוכדנצר מלך בבל. ז ויהי אמן את-הדסה היא אסתר	ויהי-איש מבנימין ושמו קיש בן-אביאל בן-צרוך בן-בכורת בן-אפיח בן-איש ימיני גבור חיל. ולו-היה בן ושמו שאול בחור וטוב.
Does not reveal	(2:20) אין אסתר מגדת מולדתה ואת-עמה	“the matter of the kingship he did not tell him” (1 Samuel 10:16)
Agag/Amalek	Mordecai and Esther succeed by defeating Haman “the Agagite.”	Saul loses his kingship for failing to destroy Agag, king of the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15).
Remaining silent?	Mordecai charges Esther that she “must not remain silent (תחרישי) (4:14).	One of Saul’s early mistakes was his failure to act decisively when faced with challenges to his authority at the beginning of his reign. Instead, the text says, “he remained silent (מחריש).”
The “father’s house”	Mordecai tells Esther that if she does remain silent, “you and your father’s house” (את וביית אביך) will perish (כי אם-החרש תחרישי בעת הזאת...את וביית-אביך . (4:14), תאבדו	Samuel told Saul: “Who does the entire Israel desire? You – and your father’s house!” (ולמי כל-חמדת ישראל הלווא לך ) (1 Samuel 9:20). ולכל בית אביך
The banquets	In Esther, the queen hosts two banquets, on successive days; the first passes uneventfully, while at the second, the king rises angrily and leaves, and Haman observes that כי ראה כי-כלתה אליו הרעה “the king definitely intends evil against him” (Esther 7:7).	In 1 Samuel 20, Saul hosts a feast on one day, and then another feast the next day (v. 27). Whereas the first one passes uneventfully, at the second the host, Saul, becomes enraged at one guest, Jonathan, for betraying him and protecting David. Jonathan concludes that כלתה הרעה “[Saul] definitely intends evil” (v. 7) and rises angrily from the feast (v. 34: ויקם יהונתן מעם השלחן בקרי-אף).
רוח	In concluding his plea for action, Mordecai tells Esther that what she must bring is רוח והצלה. The concept of רוח is not one with positive resonances for Saul.	“Relief” (רוח) eluded Saul when he was king, and he was able to achieve it only by relying on the upstart David: “David would take the lyre and play by hand, and bring relief (רוח) to Saul so that he had it good, and the evil spirit would depart from him.
Spoils of war	Finally, in the battles at the end the Jews “do not touch the spoils” (9:15). This is despite the fact that in 8:11, they were explicitly given permission to plunder their enemies.	In 1 Samuel 15, the Israelites, in direct violation of religious orders, brought back spoils of war from Amalek.