

Susa (Shushan) was the city of the summer palace of ancient Persian kings. It is the setting of the Bible book of Esther. **“At that time King Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of Susa” (Esther 1:2 NIV)**. A team of French archaeologists working there during the 1970's discovered some locations mentioned in Esther. One of these very interesting finds is was a large gate at Susa, known as **“the King's gate,”** (also called the Great Gate), which is mentioned 11 times in Esther (**Esther 2:19,21; 3:2,3; 4:2,6; 5:9,13; 6:10,12**).



The King's gate found at the ancient Persian city of Susa confirms what the Bible says in the book of Esther.

At this gate, Mordecai discovered a plot to murder king Xerxes (**Esther 2:21-23**), and where Mordecai sat down in mourning (**Esther 4:1,2,6**)

“The King's gate”, or gatehouse was about 87.5 yards (80 meters) east of the palace, and was a very imposing structure. It was about 45.8 yards (40 meters) across with a central room that was about 23 yards (21 meters) square. Huge columns flanked the entire structure. Inside the gate, two heavy columns supported the roof. The column bases have an Achaemenid inscription (known as *Xsd*) in three languages from King Xerxes himself that celebrates the building of the gatehouse by his predecessor Darius and honors the Persian god Ahuramazda. It reads: *“King Xerxes says: by the grace of Ahuramazda, king Darius, my father, built this portico.”* The inscription itself suggests that with a generation after its construction, the gate needed repairs.

A tremendous statue of Darius was excavated in 1972, which was at one time standing at the western end of the gate. This statue is now in the National Museum in Tehran, and is quite

remarkable because it is made of Egyptian greywacke, and shows the king in a characteristic Egyptian pose, and has an inscription written in hieroglyphic script. The statue was probably built in Egypt along the Nile river, and brought to Susa after a revolt.

The ancient historian Herodotus of Halicarnassus spoke of suppliants who wailed before the Persian king's gate (*History*, 3.117), waiting for an audience with the king (e.g., in the story of Syloson's cloak). The rule expressed at **Esther 4:2**, "**He went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it**" (NIV), may have been intended to make the point that petitioners to the king who wore sackcloth could come as far as the gate, but no farther.

The discovery of the large gate at Susa, called "**the king's gate**" in the Bible book of Esther, confirms the authenticity of the Bible. The Bible has thousands of such supporting archaeological discoveries, in contrast with the Book of Mormon, which names lots of places and peoples in North America, none of have ever been verified. Which book is more likely, to you, to be "**the word of the Lord**" (**1 Peter 1:25**)?