

The Book of
Esther

1 The feast of Xerxes. 12 Queen Vashti refuses to come. 16 Vashti is deposed. 2:16 Esther is chosen to be Queen.

1 Now it came to pass in *the* days of ¹Ahasuerus, (this *is* the Ahasuerus who reigned from India even unto ²Ethiopia, *over* a hundred twenty-seven provinces,) 2 *that* in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on *the* throne of his kingdom, which *was* in Shushan the ³palace, 3 in *the* third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; *the* power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, *being* before him; 4 when he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honor of his excellent majesty many days, *even* a hundred eighty days. 5 And when these days were fulfilled, the king made a feast unto all the people *that* were present in Shushan the palace, both great and small, seven days, in *the* court of *the* garden of the king's palace. 6 *There were hangings of* ⁴white cloth, *of* ⁵green, and *of* blue, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: *the couches were of* gold and silver, upon a pavement ⁶of red, and white, and yellow, and black marble. 7 And they gave *them* drink in vessels of gold, (*the vessels being diverse one from another,*) and royal wine in abundance, according to *the* ⁷bounty of the king. 8 And the drinking *was* according to the law; none could compel: for so the king had appointed to all *the* officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.

9 Also Vashti the queen made a feast for *the* women in the royal house which *belonged* to king Ahasuerus. 10 On the seventh day, when *the* heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven ⁸chamberlains *that* ministered in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, 11 to bring Vashti the queen before the king with *the* crown royal, to show the peoples and the princes her beauty; for she *was* fair to look on. 12 But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by the chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.

¹ Or, Xerxes, *Hb.* Ahashverosh, successor of Darius I, father of Artaxerxes, and grandfather of Darius II.

² *Hb.* Cush, or, Black Africa,

³ Or, castle, *And so elsewhere.*

⁴ Or, fine cloth, white and blue,

⁵ Or, cotton,

⁶ Or, of porphyry, and white marble, and alabaster, and stone of blue color.

⁷ *Hb.* hand of the king.

⁸ Or, eunuchs *And so elsewhere.*

13 Then the king said to *the* wise men, who knew the times, (for so *was* the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment; 14 and the next unto him *were* Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, *the* seven princes of Persia and Media, who saw the king's face, and sat first in the kingdom,) 15 What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not done the bidding of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains? 16 And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the peoples that *are* in all *the* provinces of the king Ahasuerus. 17 For *this* deed of the queen will come abroad unto all women, to make their husbands contemptible in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. 18 And this day will *the* princesses of Persia and Media who have heard of the deed of the queen ⁹say *the like* unto all the king's princes. So *will there arise* ¹⁰much contempt and wrath. 19 If it please the king, let there go forth a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among *the* laws of *the* Persians and *the* Medes, ¹¹that it be not altered, that Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate ¹²unto another *that* is better than she. 20 And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his kingdom, (for it is great,) all the wives will give to their husbands honor, both to great and small. 21 And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to *the* word of Memucan: 22 for he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to *the* writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and should speak according to *the* language of his people.

2 After these things, when *the* wrath of king Ahasuerus was pacified, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. 2 Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king: 3 and let the king appoint officers in all *the* provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to *the* house of the women, unto *the* custody of

⁹ Or, tell *it* unto all the king's princes.

¹⁰ Or, enough contempt and wrath.

¹¹ *Hb.* that it pass not away,

¹² *Hb.* unto her companion.

¹³Hegai the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given *them*; 4 and let the maiden that pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

5 There was a certain Jew in Shushan the palace, whose name *was* Mordecai, *the* son of Jair, *the* son of Shimei, *the* son of Kish, a Benjamite, 6 who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives that had been carried away with ¹⁴Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar *the* king of Babylon had carried away. 7 And he ¹⁵brought up Hadassah, that *is*, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maiden *was* fair and beautiful; and when her father and mother were dead, Mordecai took her for his own daughter.

8 So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to *the* custody of Hegai, that Esther was taken into the king's house, to *the* custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. 9 And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her things to her for purification, with her portions, and the seven maidens *who were* meet to be given her out of the king's house: and he removed her and her maidens to *the best place of the* house of the women. 10 Esther had not made known her people nor her kindred; for Mordecai had charged her that she should not make *it* known. 11 And Mordecai walked every day before *the* court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what would become of her.

12 Now when *the* turn of every maiden was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that it had been done to her according to *the* law for the women twelve months, (for so were *the* days of their purifications accomplished, *to wit*, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors and with *the* things for *the* purifying of the women,) 13 then in this wise came the maiden unto the king: whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of *the* house of the women unto the king's house. 14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into *the* second house of the women, to *the* custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, who kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and she were called by name. 15 Now when *the* turn of Esther, *the* daughter of Abihail *the* uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, *the* keeper of the women appointed. And Esther obtained favor in *the* sight of all them that looked upon her.

¹³ *Hb.* Hegee

¹⁴ *In* 2Ki 24:6, Jehoiachin

¹⁵ *Hb.* nourished Hadassah,

16 So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which *is the* month Tebeth, ¹⁶in *the* seventh year of his reign. 17 And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained favor and kindness 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. 18 Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, *even* Esther's feast; and he made a ¹⁷release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to *the* ¹⁸bounty of the king.

19 And when *the* virgins were gathered together *the* second time, then Mordecai was sitting in the king's gate. 20 Esther had not *yet* made known her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him. 21 In those days, while Mordecai was sitting in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those that kept the threshold, were wroth, and sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus. 22 And the thing became known to Mordecai, who showed it unto Esther the queen; and Esther told the king *thereof* in Mordecai's name. 23 And when inquisition was made of the matter, and it was found to be so, they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in *the* book of the chronicles before the king.

3 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. 2 And all the king's servants, that *were* in the king's gate, bowed down, and did reverence to Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not down, nor did *him* reverence. 3 Then the king's servants, that *were* in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment? 4 Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's ¹⁹matters would stand: for he had told them that he *was* a Jew. 5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not down, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. 6 But he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had made known to him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that *were* throughout *the* whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, *even the* people of Mordecai.

7 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 from month

¹⁶ *Two years after he burned Athens; months after his disastrous defeat at Plataea. Likely BC 478 Jan.*

¹⁷ *Hb.* rest

¹⁸ *Hb.* hand of the king.

¹⁹ *Or,* words

to month, *to the twelfth month*, which *is the month* Adar. 8 And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and ²⁰dispersed among the peoples in all *the* provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws *are* diverse from *those of* every people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it *is* not ²¹for the king's profit to suffer them. 9 If it please the king, let it be written that they be destroyed: and I will pay ²²ten thousand talents of silver into *the* hands of those that have *the* charge of the *king's* business, to bring *it* into the king's treasuries. 10 And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman *the* son of Hammedatha ²³the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. 11 And the king said unto Haman, The silver *is* given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

12 Then were the king's scribes called in the first month, on *the* thirteenth day thereof; and there was written according to all that Haman commanded unto the king's satraps, and to the governors that *were* over every province, and to *the* princes of every people, to every province according to *the* writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and it was sealed with the king's ring. 13 And letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to slay, and to *cause* to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, *even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month*, which *is the month* Adar, and to *take the* spoil of them for a prey. 14 A copy of the writing, ²⁴that the decree should be given out in every province, was published unto all the peoples, that they should be ready against that day. 15 The posts went forth in haste by the king's commandment, and the decree was given out in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

4 Now when Mordecai knew all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into *the* midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; 2 and he came even before the king's gate: for none *might* enter within the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. 3 And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and ²⁵many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 And Esther's maidens and her chamberlains came and told *it* her; and the queen was exceedingly grieved:

²⁰ *Or*, separated

²¹ *Or*, not appropriate for the king to suffer them.

²² *That is*, 348 metric tons

²³ *An Amalakite*, per Josephus, Antiq. IX, 6, 5.

Cf. 1Sa 15:32; Ex 17:16.

²⁴ *Or*, to be given out for a decree in every province,

²⁵ *Hb.* sackcloth and ashes were spread under many.

and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take his sackcloth from off him; but he received *it* not. 5 Then called Esther for Hathach, *one* of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and charged him to go to Mordecai, to know what this *was*, and why it *was*. 6 So Hathach went forth to Mordecai unto *the* broad place of the city, which *was* before the king's gate. 7 And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and the exact sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. 8 Also he gave him the copy of *the* writing of the decree that was given out in Shushan to destroy them, to show *it* unto Esther, and to declare *it* unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him, for her people.

9 And Hathach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai. 10 Then Esther spake unto Hathach, and gave him a message unto Mordecai, *saying*: 11 All the king's servants, and *the* people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, *there is* one law for him, *that he be* put to death, except those to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. 12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

13 Then Mordecai bade them return answer unto Esther, Think not with thy soul that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. 14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then* will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish: and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this? 15 Then Esther bade *them* return answer unto Mordecai, 16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which *is* not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. 17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

5 Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on *her* royal *apparel*, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against *the* entrance of the house. 2 And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, *that* she obtained favor 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. 3 Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what *is* thy request? it shall be given thee even to *the* half of the kingdom. 4 And Esther said, If *it seem* good unto the king, let the king and

Haman come *this* day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

5 Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that it may be done as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. 6 And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What *is* thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what *is* thy request? even to *the* half of the kingdom it shall be performed. 7 Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request *is*: 8 if I have found favor 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 tomorrow as the king hath said.

9 Then went Haman forth that day joyful and glad of heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up nor ²⁶moved for him, he was filled with wrath against Mordecai. 10 Nevertheless Haman refrained himself, and went home; and he sent and fetched his friends and Zeresh his wife. 11 And Haman recounted unto them the glory of his riches, and *the* multitude of his children, and all the *things* wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. 12 Haman said moreover, Yes, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and tomorrow also am I invited by her together with the king. 13 Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. 14 Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a ²⁷gallows be made ²⁸fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

6 On that night ²⁹could not the king sleep; and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles, and they were read before the king. 2 And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, of those that kept the threshold, who had sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus. 3 And the king said, What honor and dignity hath been bestowed on Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him. 4 And the king said, Who *is* in the court? Now Haman was come into *the* outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. 5 And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court.

²⁶ *Or*, trembled before him,

²⁷ *Hb.* tree (*both times*) *And so everywhere.*

²⁸ 50 cubits = 22.2 meter = 73 feet. *And in ch. 7:9.*

²⁹ *Hb.* the king's sleep fled *from him*;

And the king said, Let him come in. 6 So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor? Now Haman said in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honor more than to myself? 7 And Haman said unto the king, For *the* man whom the king delighteth to honor, 8 let royal apparel be brought which the king *useth* to wear, and *the* horse that the king rideth upon, ³⁰and on *the* head of which a crown royal is set: 9 and let the apparel and the horse be delivered to *the* hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man *therewith* whom the king delighteth to honor, and cause him to ride on horseback through *the* street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor.

10 Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, *and* take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, *that* sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken. 11 Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and caused him to ride through *the* street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor. 12 And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hasted to his house, mourning and having his head covered. 13 And Haman recounted unto Zeresh his wife and all his friends *everything* that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai, before whom thou hast begun to fall, *be* of *the* seed of the Jews, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him. 14 While they *were* yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

7 So the king and Haman came ³¹to banquet with Esther the queen. 2 And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What *is* thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what *is* thy request? *even* to *the* half of the kingdom it shall be performed. 3 Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my soul be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: 4 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 peace, ³²although the adversary could not have compensated for the king's damage. 5 Then spake the king Ahasuerus and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? 6 And Esther said, An adversary and an enemy,

³⁰ *Or*, and *the* crown royal which is set upon his head:

³¹ *Hb.* to drink with Esther the queen.

³² *Or*, for *our* affliction is not to be compared with the king's damage.

even this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. 7 And the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine *and went* into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his soul to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. 8 Then the king returned out of the palace garden into *the* house of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the couch whereon Esther *was*. Then said the king, Will he even force the queen before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. 9 Then said Harbonah, one of the chamberlains *that were* before the king, Behold also, the ³³gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman hath made for Mordecai, who spake good for the king, standeth in *the* house of Haman. And the king said, Hang him thereon. 10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

8 On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her. 2 And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over *the* house of Haman.

3 And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews. 4 Then the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre. So Esther arose, and stood before the king. 5 And she said, If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and the thing *seem* right before the king, and *I be* pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman, *the* son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews that *are* in all the king's provinces: 6 for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see *the* destruction of my kindred? 7 Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther *the* house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews. 8 Write ye also ³⁴to the Jews, as it pleaseth you, in the king's name, and seal *it* with the king's ring; for *the* writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.

9 Then were the king's scribes called at that time, in the third month, which *is the* month Sivan, on the twenty-third *day* thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the satraps, and the governors and princes of the provinces which *are* from India unto Ethiopia,

³³ *Hb.* tree *And so everywhere.*

³⁴ *Or,* concerning

a hundred twenty-seven provinces, unto every province according to *the* writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language. 10 And he wrote in the name of king Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, riding on ³⁵swift steeds *that were used in* the king's service, bred of the studs: 11 wherein the king granted the Jews that *were* in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their souls, to destroy, to slay, and *to cause* to perish, all the power of *the* people and province *that would assault them, their* little ones and women, and *to take the* spoil of them for a prey, 12 upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, *namely, upon the* thirteenth *day of the* twelfth month, which *is the* month Adar. 13 A copy of the writing, that *the* decree should be given out in every province, *was* published unto all the peoples, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. 14 So the posts that rode upon swift steeds *that were used in* the king's service went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment; and the decree was given out in Shushan the palace.

15 And Mordecai went forth from *the* presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a robe of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan shouted and was glad. 16 The Jews had light and gladness, and joy and honor. 17 And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had gladness and joy, a feast and a good day. And many from among *the* peoples of the land became Jews; for *the* fear of the Jews was fallen upon them.

9 Now in *the* twelfth month, which *is the* month Adar, on the thirteenth day of *the* same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, on the day that *the* enemies of the Jews hoped to have rule over them, (whereas it was turned to *the* contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them,) 2 the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all *the* provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for *the* fear of them was fallen upon all the peoples. 3 And all *the* princes of the provinces, and the satraps, and the governors, and they that did the king's business, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai was fallen upon them. 4 For Mordecai *was* great in the king's house, and his fame went forth throughout all the provinces: for the man Mordecai waxed greater and greater. 5 And the Jews smote all their enemies with *the* stroke of *the* sword, and with slaughter and destruction, and

³⁵ *Or,* swift steeds, mules, *and* young dromedaries:

did what they would unto them that hated them. 6 And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men. 7 And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha, 8 and Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha, 9 and Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vaizatha, 10 *the* ten sons of Haman *the* son of Hammedatha, the Jews' enemy, slew they; but on the spoil they laid not their hand.

11 On that day *the* number of those *that* were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king. 12 And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what then have they done in *the* rest of the king's provinces! Now what *is* thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what *is* thy request further? and it shall be done. 13 Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews that *are* in Shushan to do tomorrow also according unto *this* day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows. 14 And the king commanded it so to be done: and a decree was given out in Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons. 15 And the Jews that *were* in Shushan gathered themselves together on *the* fourteenth day also of *the* month Adar, and slew three hundred men in Shushan; but on the spoil they laid not their hand. 16 And the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their souls, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of them that hated them seventy-five thousand; but on the spoil they laid not their hand.

17 *This was done on the* thirteenth day of *the* month Adar; and on *the* fourteenth day of *the* same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. 18 But the Jews that *were* in Shushan assembled together on *the* thirteenth *day* thereof, and on *the* fourteenth thereof; and on *the* fifteenth *day* of *the* same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. 19 Therefore do the Jews of the villages that dwell in the unwalled towns, make the fourteenth day of *the* month Adar *a day of* gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.

20 And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that *were* in all *the* provinces of the king Ahasuerus, *both* near and far, 21 to enjoin them that they should keep the fourteenth day of *the* month Adar, and the fifteenth day of *the* same, yearly, 22 as the days wherein the Jews had rest from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor. 23 And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them; 24 because Haman *the* son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, *the* enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that *is*, the lot,

to consume them, and to destroy them; 25 but when *the matter* came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he had devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

26 Wherefore they called these days Purim, after the name of Pur. Therefore because of all *the* words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and that which had come unto them, 27 the Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so that it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to *the* writing thereof, and according to *the appointed* time thereof, every year; 28 and that these days *should be* remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor *the* remembrance of them ³⁶perish from their seed.

29 Then Esther the queen, *the* daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all ³⁷authority to confirm this second letter of Purim. 30 And he sent letters unto all the Jews, to *the* hundred twenty-seven provinces of *the* kingdom of Ahasuerus, *with* words of peace and truth, 31 to confirm these days of Purim in their *appointed* times, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had ordained for their souls and for their seed, in *the* matter of the fastings and their cry. 32 And *the* commandment of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

10 And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon *the* isles of the sea. 2 And all *the* acts of his power and of his might, and *the* full account of *the* greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, *are* they not written in *the* book of the chronicles of *the* kings of Media and Persia? 3 For Mordecai the Jew *was* next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of *the* multitude of his brethren, seeking *the* good of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

End of the Book of Esther

End of the Historical Books

[Xerxes spent his first two years suppressing an Egyptian revolt. Year three was tranquil, while carefully organizing a campaign against Grecia. In the fourth year, months 5-7 (August-October) were spent overcoming the Babylonian revolt of Bel-Shimanni and Shamash-eriba. Most of years five and six, Xerxes was away fighting in Grecia, returning home late in the sixth year.]

³⁶ *Hb.* be ended from their seed.

³⁷ *Hb.* strength