

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Esther

The Book of Esther

Translation. King James Version, text of 1769; the additions from its Apocrypha.

In this file. Complete.



*Esther falls down at the king's feet, and he holds out the golden scepter
(Esther 8:3-4)*

1 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:) ² That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace, 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: ⁴When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, *even* an hundred and fourscore days. ⁵And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace; ⁶*Where were* white, green, and blue, *hangings*, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds *were* of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble. ⁷And they gave *them* drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king. ⁸And the drinking *was* according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure. ⁹Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women *in* the royal house which *belonged* to king Ahasuerus.

¹⁰On 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 chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, ¹¹To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she *was* fair to look on. ¹²But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by *his* chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.

¹³Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times, (for so *was* the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment: ¹⁴And the next unto him *was* Carshena, Shethar, Admatha,

Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, *and* Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, *and* which sat the first in the kingdom;) ¹⁵ What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment 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 people that *are* in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. ¹⁷ For *this* deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands 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 *Likewise* shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus *shall there arise* too much contempt and wrath. ¹⁹ If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. ²⁰ And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, 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 that *it* should be published according to the language of every people.

2 After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, 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 Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given *them*: ⁴ And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

⁵ Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, 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 captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. ⁷ And he brought up Hadassah, that *is*, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid *was* fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took 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 brought also unto 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 her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, *which were* meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best *place* of the house of the women. ¹⁰ Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew *it*. ¹¹ And Mordecai walked every day before the court

of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.

¹² Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, *to wit*, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with *other* things for the purifying of the women;) ¹³ Then thus came *every* 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, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that 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 favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. ¹⁶ So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which *is* the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. ¹⁷ And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour 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 release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king. ¹⁹ And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate. ²⁰ Esther had not yet shewed 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 sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. ²² And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told *it* unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king *thereof* in Mordecai's name. ²³ And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore 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, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did *him* reverence. ³ Then the king's servants, which *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 matters would stand: for he had told them that he *was* a Jew. ⁵ And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. ⁶ And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed 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, that *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 to month, *to* the twelfth *month*, that *is*, the month Adar.

⁸ And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws *are* diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it *is* not for the king's profit to suffer them. ⁹ If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the 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 the 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 on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that *were* over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and *to* every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. ¹³ And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, 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 The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day. ¹⁵ The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

4 When Mordecai perceived 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 came even before the king's gate: for none *might* enter into 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 many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴ So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told *it* her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received *it* not.

⁵ Then called Esther for Hatach, *one* of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it *was*, and why it *was*. ⁶ So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which *was* before the king's gate. ⁷ And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the 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 at Shushan to destroy them, to shew *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 Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

¹⁰ Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai; 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 of his to put *him* to death, except such 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 commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself 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* shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?

¹⁵ Then Esther bade *them* return Mordecai *this answer*, 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 likewise; 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 gate of the house. ² And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, *that* she obtained favour 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 even given thee to the half of the kingdom. ⁴ And Esther answered, 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

he may do 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 favour 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 to morrow as the king hath said.

⁹ Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. ¹⁰ Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. ¹¹ And Haman told them of 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, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to morrow am I invited unto her also 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 gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow 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 could 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, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. ³ And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to 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. 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 honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself? ⁷ And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, ⁸ Let the royal apparel be brought which the king *useth* to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: ⁹ And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man *withal* whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him 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 honour. 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 brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

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 told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every *thing* that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai *be* of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him. ¹⁴ And 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 to 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? and it shall be performed, *even* to the half of the kingdom. ³ Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life 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 tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

⁵ Then the king Ahasuerus answered 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, The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.

⁷ And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath *went* into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life 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 place of the banquet of wine;

and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther *was*. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. ⁹ And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then 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 the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king, ⁵ And said, If it please the king, and if I have found favour 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 which *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 for the Jews, as it liketh 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, that *is*, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth *day* thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which *are* from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and 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 king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed *it* with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, *and* riders on mules, camels, *and* young dromedaries: ¹¹ Wherein the king granted the Jews which *were* in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, *both* 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 The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province *was* published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. ¹⁴ So the posts that rode upon mules *and* camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace.

¹⁵ And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of

Shushan rejoiced and was glad. ¹⁶The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. ¹⁷And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

9 Now in the twelfth month, that *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, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;) ²The 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 fell upon all people. ³And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them. ⁴For Mordecai *was* great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater. ⁵Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them. ⁶And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men. ⁷And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha, ⁸And Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha, ⁹And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha, ¹⁰The ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they; but on the spoil laid they not their hand. ¹¹On 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 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 which *are* in Shushan to do to morrow 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 the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons. ¹⁵ For the Jews that *were* in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan; but on the prey they laid not their hand. ¹⁶ But the other Jews that *were* in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, but they laid not their hands on the prey, ¹⁷ On the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and on the fourteenth day of the same rested they, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. ¹⁸ But the Jews that *were* at 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 the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwall'd towns, made 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* nigh and far, ²¹ To stablish *this* among 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

rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, 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 devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that *is*, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them; ²⁵ But when *Esther* came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he 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 for all the words of this letter, and *of that* which they had seen concerning this matter, and 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 as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their *appointed* time 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 memorial of them perish from their seed. ²⁹ Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim. ³⁰ And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, *with* words of peace and truth, ³¹ To confirm these days of Purim in their times *appointed*, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry. ³² And the

decree 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 declaration 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 wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

The Rest of the Chapters of the Book of Esther

10 ⁴ Then Mardocheus said, God hath done these things. ⁵ For I remember a dream which I saw concerning these matters, and nothing thereof hath failed. ⁶ A little fountain became a river, and there was light, and the sun, and much water: this river is Esther, whom the king married, and made queen: ⁷ And the two dragons are I and Aman. ⁸ And the nations were those that were assembled to destroy the name of the Jews: ⁹ And my nation is this Israel, which cried to God, and were saved: for the Lord hath saved his people, and the Lord hath delivered us from all those evils, and God hath wrought signs and great wonders, which have not been done among the Gentiles. ¹⁰ Therefore hath he made two lots, one for the people of God, and another for all the Gentiles. ¹¹ And these two lots came at the hour, and time, and day of judgment, before God among all nations. ¹² So God remembered his people, and justified his inheritance. ¹³ Therefore those days shall be unto them in the month Adar, the fourteenth and fifteenth day of the same month, with an assembly, and joy, and

with gladness before God, according to the generations for ever among his people.

11 In the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemeus and Cleopatra, Dositheus, who said he was a priest and Levite, and Ptolemeus his son, brought this epistle of Phurim, which they said was the same, and that Lysimachus the son of Ptolemeus, that was in Jerusalem, had interpreted it. ² In the second year of the reign of Artexerxes the great, in the first day of the month Nisan, Mardocheus the son of Jairus, the son of Semei, the son of Cisai, of the tribe of Benjamin, had a dream; ³ Who was a Jew, and dwelt in the city of Susa, a great man, being a servitor in the king's court. ⁴ He was also one of the captives, which Nabuchodonosor the king of Babylon carried from Jerusalem with Jechonias king of Judea; and this was his dream: ⁵ Behold a noise of a tumult, with thunder, and earthquakes, and uproar in the land: ⁶ And, behold, two great dragons came forth ready to fight, and their cry was great. ⁷ And at their cry all nations were prepared to battle, that they might fight against the righteous people. ⁸ And lo a day of darkness and obscurity, tribulation and anguish, affliction and great uproar, upon earth. ⁹ And the whole righteous nation was troubled, fearing their own evils, and were ready to perish. ¹⁰ Then they cried unto God, and upon their cry, as it were from a little fountain, was made a great flood, even much water. ¹¹ The light and the sun rose up, and the lowly were exalted, and devoured the glorious. ¹² Now when Mardocheus, who had seen this dream, and what God had determined to do, was awake, he bare this dream in mind, and until night by all means was desirous to know it.

12 And Mardocheus took his rest in the court with Gabatha and Tharra, the two eunuchs of the king, and keepers of the palace. ² And he heard their devices, and searched out their purposes, and learned that they were about to lay hands upon Artexerxes the king; and so he certified the king of them. ³ Then the king examined the two eunuchs, and after that they had confessed it, they were strangled. ⁴ And the king made a record of these things, and Mardocheus also wrote thereof. ⁵ So the king commanded Mardocheus to serve in the court, and for this he rewarded him. ⁶ Howbeit Aman the son of Amadathus the Agagite, who was in great honour with the king, sought to molest Mardocheus and his people because of the two eunuchs of the king.

13 The copy of the letters was this: The great king Artexerxes writeth these things to the princes and governours that are under him from India unto Ethiopia in an hundred and seven and twenty provinces. ² After that I became lord over many nations and had dominion over the whole world, not lifted up with presumption of my authority, but carrying myself always with equity and mildness, I purposed to settle my subjects continually in a quiet life, and making my kingdom peaceable, and open for passage to the utmost coasts, to renew peace, which is desired of all men. ³ Now when I asked my counsellors how this might be brought to pass, Aman, that excelled in wisdom among us, and was approved for his constant good will and steadfast fidelity, and had the honour of the second place in the kingdom, ⁴ Declared unto us, that in all nations throughout the world there was scattered a certain malicious people, that had laws contrary to all nations, and continually despised the commandments of kings, so as the uniting of our kingdoms, honourably intended by us cannot go forward. ⁵ Seeing then we understand that this

people alone is continually in opposition unto all men, differing in the strange manner of their laws, and evil affected to our state, working all the mischief they can that our kingdom may not be firmly established: ⁶ Therefore have we commanded, that all they that are signified in writing unto you by Aman, who is ordained over the affairs, and is next unto us, shall all, with their wives and children, be utterly destroyed by the sword of their enemies, without all mercy and pity, the fourteenth day of the twelfth month Adar of this present year: ⁷ That they, who of old and now also are malicious, may in one day with violence go into the grave, and so ever hereafter cause our affairs to be well settled, and without trouble. ⁸ Then Mardocheus thought upon all the works of the Lord, and made his prayer unto him, ⁹ Saying, O Lord, Lord, the King Almighty: for the whole world is in thy power, and if thou hast appointed to save Israel, there is no man that can gainsay thee: ¹⁰ For thou hast made heaven and earth, and all the wondrous things under the heaven. ¹¹ Thou art Lord of all things, and there is no man that can resist thee, which art the Lord. ¹² Thou knowest all things, and thou knowest, Lord, that it was neither in contempt nor pride, nor for any desire of glory, that I did not bow down to proud Aman. ¹³ For I could have been content with good will for the salvation of Israel to kiss the soles of his feet. ¹⁴ But I did this, that I might not prefer the glory of man above the glory of God: neither will I worship any but thee, O God, neither will I do it in pride. ¹⁵ And now, O Lord God and King, spare thy people: for their eyes are upon us to bring us to nought; yea, they desire to destroy the inheritance, that hath been thine from the beginning. ¹⁶ Despise not the portion, which thou hast delivered out of Egypt for thine own self. ¹⁷ Hear my prayer, and be merciful unto thine inheritance: turn our sorrow into joy, that we may live, O Lord, and praise thy name: and

destroy not the mouths of them that praise thee, O Lord. ¹⁸ All Israel in like manner cried most earnestly unto the Lord, because their death was before their eyes.

14 Queen Esther also, being in fear of death, resorted unto the Lord: ² And laid away her glorious apparel, and put on the garments of anguish and mourning: and instead of precious ointments, she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she humbled her body greatly, and all the places of her joy she filled with her torn hair. ³ And she prayed unto the Lord God of Israel, saying, O my Lord, thou only art our King: help me, desolate woman, which have no helper but thee: ⁴ For my danger is in mine hand. ⁵ From my youth up I have heard in the tribe of my family that thou, O Lord, tookest Israel from among all people, and our fathers from all their predecessors, for a perpetual inheritance, and thou hast performed whatsoever thou didst promise them. ⁶ And now we have sinned before thee: therefore hast thou given us into the hands of our enemies, ⁷ Because we worshipped their gods: O Lord, thou art righteous. ⁸ Nevertheless it satisfieth them not, that we are in bitter captivity: but they have stricken hands with their idols, ⁹ That they will abolish the thing that thou with thy mouth hast ordained, and destroy thine inheritance, and stop the mouth of them that praise thee, and quench the glory of thy house, and of thine altar, ¹⁰ And open the mouths of the heathen to set forth the praises of the idols, and to magnify a fleshly king for ever. ¹¹ O Lord, give not thy sceptre unto them that be nothing, and let them not laugh at our fall; but turn their device upon themselves, and make him an example, that hath begun this against us. ¹² Remember, O Lord, make thyself known in time of our affliction, and give me boldness, O King of the nations, and Lord of all power. ¹³ Give me eloquent speech in my

mouth before the lion: turn his heart to hate him that fighteth against us, that there may be an end of him, and of all that are likeminded to him: ¹⁴ But deliver us with thine hand, and help me that am desolate, and which have no other help but thee. ¹⁵ Thou knowest all things, O Lord; thou knowest that I hate the glory of the unrighteous, and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised, and of all the heathen. ¹⁶ Thou knowest my necessity: for I abhor the sign of my high estate, which is upon mine head in the days wherein I shew myself, and that I abhor it as a menstruous rag, and that I wear it not when I am private by myself. ¹⁷ And that thine handmaid hath not eaten at Aman's table, and that I have not greatly esteemed the king's feast, nor drunk the wine of the drink offerings. ¹⁸ Neither had thine handmaid any joy since the day that I was brought hither to this present, but in thee, O Lord God of Abraham. ¹⁹ O thou mighty God above all, hear the voice of the forlorn and deliver us out of the hands of the mischievous, and deliver me out of my fear.

15 And upon the third day, when she had ended her prayers, she laid away her mourning garments, and put on her glorious apparel. ² And being gloriously adorned, after she had called upon God, who is the beholder and saviour of all things, she took two maids with her: ³ And upon the one she leaned, as carrying herself daintily; ⁴ And the other followed, bearing up her train. ⁵ And she was ruddy through the perfection of her beauty, and her countenance was cheerful and very amiable: but her heart was in anguish for fear. ⁶ Then having passed through all the doors, she stood before the king, who sat upon his royal throne, and was clothed with all his robes of majesty, all glittering with gold and precious stones; and he was very dreadful. ⁷ Then lifting up his countenance that shone with majesty, he looked very fiercely

upon her: and the queen fell down, and was pale, and fainted, and bowed herself upon the head of the maid that went before her. ⁸ Then God changed the spirit of the king into mildness, who in a fear leaped from his throne, and took her in his arms, till she came to herself again, and comforted her with loving words and said unto her, ⁹ Esther, what is the matter? I am thy brother, be of good cheer: ¹⁰ Thou shalt not die, though our commandment be general: come near. ¹¹ And so he held up his golden sceptre, and laid it upon her neck, ¹² And embraced her, and said, Speak unto me. ¹³ Then said she unto him, I saw thee, my lord, as an angel of God, and my heart was troubled for fear of thy majesty. ¹⁴ For wonderful art thou, lord, and thy countenance is full of grace. ¹⁵ And as she was speaking, she fell down for faintness. ¹⁶ Then the king was troubled, and all his servants comforted her.

16 The great king Artexerxes unto the princes and governors of an hundred and seven and twenty provinces from India unto Ethiopia, and unto all our faithful subjects, greeting. ² Many, the more often they are honoured with the great bounty of their gracious princes, the more proud they are waxen, ³ And endeavour to hurt not our subjects only, but not being able to bear abundance, do take in hand to practise also against those that do them good: ⁴ And take not only thankfulness away from among men, but also lifted up with the glorious words of lewd persons, that were never good, they think to escape the justice of God, that seeth all things and hateth evil. ⁵ Oftentimes also fair speech of those, that are put in trust to manage their friends' affairs, hath caused many that are in authority to be partakers of innocent blood, and hath enwrapped them in remediless calamities: ⁶ Beguiling with the falsehood and deceit of their lewd disposition the innocency and goodness of princes. ⁷ Now ye may see this, as we have declared,

not so much by ancient histories, as ye may, if ye search what hath been wickedly done of late through the pestilent behaviour of them that are unworthily placed in authority. ⁸ And we must take care for the time to come, that our kingdom may be quiet and peaceable for all men, ⁹ Both by changing our purposes, and always judging things that are evident with more equal proceeding. ¹⁰ For Aman, a Macedonian, the son of Amadatha, being indeed a stranger from the Persian blood, and far distant from our goodness, and as a stranger received of us, ¹¹ Had so far forth obtained the favour that we shew toward every nation, as that he was called our father, and was continually honoured of all the next person unto the king. ¹² But he, not bearing his great dignity, went about to deprive us of our kingdom and life: ¹³ Having by manifold and cunning deceits sought of us the destruction, as well of Mardocheus, who saved our life, and continually procured our good, as also of blameless Esther, partaker of our kingdom, with their whole nation. ¹⁴ For by these means he thought, finding us destitute of friends, to have translated the kingdom of the Persians to the Macedonians. ¹⁵ But we find that the Jews, whom this wicked wretch hath delivered to utter destruction, are no evildoers, but live by most just laws: ¹⁶ And that they be children of the most high and most mighty, living God, who hath ordered the kingdom both unto us and to our progenitors in the most excellent manner. ¹⁷ Wherefore ye shall do well not to put in execution the letters sent unto you by Aman the son of Amadatha. ¹⁸ For he that was the worker of these things, is hanged at the gates of Susa with all his family: God, who ruleth all things, speedily rendering vengeance to him according to his deserts. ¹⁹ Therefore ye shall publish the copy of this letter in all places, that the Jews may freely live after their own laws. ²⁰ And ye shall aid them, that even the same day, being the thirteenth day of

the twelfth month Adar, they may be avenged on them, who in the time of their affliction shall set upon them. ²¹ For Almighty God hath turned to joy unto them the day, wherein the chosen people should have perished. ²² Ye shall therefore among your solemn feasts keep it an high day with all feasting: ²³ That both now and hereafter there may be safety to us and the well affected Persians; but to those which do conspire against us a memorial of destruction. ²⁴ Therefore every city and country whatsoever, which shall not do according to these things, shall be destroyed without mercy with fire and sword, and shall be made not only unpassable for men, but also most hateful to wild beasts and fowls for ever.