



The Book of Esther

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The Banquets of the King

1 Now it was in the days of Ahasuerus,^a the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia^b over 127 provinces,² in those days as King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne in Susa, the citadel,³ in the third year of his reign, he gave a banquet for all his princes and servants; the army of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces were before him.⁴ And he showed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor of his great majesty for many days, 180 days.

⁵When these days were completed, the king gave a banquet lasting seven days for all the people who were present at the citadel in Susa, from the greatest to the least, in the court of the garden of the king's palace.⁶ There were hangings of fine white and violet linen held by cords of fine purple linen on silver rings and marble pillars, and couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and precious stones.⁷ Drinks were served in golden vessels^c of various kinds, and the royal wine was in abundance, according to the bounty of the king.⁸ The drinking was done according to the law, there was no compulsion, for so the king had given orders to each official of his household that he should do according to every man's pleasure.⁹ Queen Vashti also gave a banquet

for the women in the palace^d which belonged to King Ahasuerus.

Queen Vashti's Refusal

¹⁰On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus,¹¹ to bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal crown in order to show her beauty to the people and the princes, for she was very beautiful.¹² But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command delivered by the eunuchs. At this the king became very angry and his wrath burned within him.

¹³Then the king said to the wise men who knew the times (for so was the king's manner toward all who knew law and justice,¹⁴ the men next to him being 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 "According to law, what is to be done with Queen Vashti, because she has not obeyed the command of King Ahasuerus delivered by the eunuchs?"¹⁶ To this Memucan said in the presence of the king and the princes, "Queen Vashti has wronged not only the king but also all the princes and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.¹⁷ For this deed of the queen will become known to all the women causing them to look with contempt on their husbands by saying, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, and she did not come.'¹⁸ This very day the princesses of Persia and Media who have heard of the conduct of the queen will speak in the same way to all the king's princes, and there will be plenty of contempt and wrath.¹⁹ If it pleases the king, let a royal edict go out from him, and let it be

^a That is Xerxes I, son of Darius the Great (Darius Hystaspis); who reigned 486-465 B.C.E.

^b Lit *Cush*

^c Or "cups; goblets."

^d Lit *royal house*



written among the laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be repealed, that Vashti is never again to come before King Ahasuerus. And let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she. ²⁰ And when the decree of the king is heard in his entire kingdom, for it is vast, all the wives will give^a honor to their husbands, from the greatest to the least.”

²¹ This word pleased the king and the princes, and the king did as Memucan proposed. ²² So he sent letters to all the king’s provinces, to each province according to its script and to every people according to their language, that every man should be the master in his own house and should speak according to the language of his people.

Vashti’s Successor Sought

2 After these things when the anger of King Ahasuerus had subsided, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her. ² Then the king’s attendants, who served him, said, “Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king. ³ And Let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom that they may gather every beautiful young virgin to the citadel of Susa, to the harem, into the custody of Hegai, the king’s eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let their cosmetics be given them. ⁴ And let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.” And this pleased the king, and he did so.

⁵ Now there was a Jew in Susa the citadel whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite, ⁶ who had been carried away from Jerusalem among the captives carried

away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away. ⁷ He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had no father or mother. Now the young woman was beautiful of form and face, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

Esther Finds Favor

⁸ So it came to pass, when the king’s commandment and his decree was heard and when many young women were gathered together to the citadel of Susa into the custody of Hegai, that Esther was taken into the king’s house, to the custody of Hegai, who had charge of the women. ⁹ And the young woman pleased him and won his favor. And he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and her portion of food, and with seven chosen young women from the king’s palace, and advanced her and her young women to the best place in the harem. ¹⁰ Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known. ¹¹ And every day Mordecai walked in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and what was happening to her.

¹² Now when the turn of each young woman came to go in to King Ahasuerus, after being twelve months under the regulations for the women, since this was the regular period of their beautifying, six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and ointments for women, ¹³ then the young woman went in to the king in this way, she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the harem to the king’s palace. ¹⁴ In the evening she would go in and in the morning she would return to the second harem, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king’s eunuch who was in charge of the concubines. She would not again go in to the king unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.

^a “It ... all the wives themselves will give.” **Hi’ Wekhol-Hannashim Yittenu** (Heb.) is the first acrostic of the Tetragrammaton, יהוה (YHWH).— Appendix 60 From The Companion Bible.



¹⁵ Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai who had taken her as his daughter, came to go in to the king, she did not request anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the women, advised. And Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her. ¹⁶ So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus to his royal palace in the tenth month which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

Esther Becomes Queen

¹⁷ The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found favor and kindness with him more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. ¹⁸ Then the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his princes and his servants; granted a remission of taxes to the provinces and gave gifts according to the king's bounty.

Mordecai Discovers a Plot

¹⁹ Now when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. ²⁰ Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, even as Mordecai had commanded her; for Esther obeyed Mordecai just as when she was brought up by him.

Mordecai Saves the King

²¹ In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs from those who guarded the door, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. ²² And the plot became known to Mordecai and he told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name. ²³ And when the matter was investigated and found to be so, they were both hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the Book of the Chronicles in the presence of the king.

Haman's Plot against the Jews

3 After these events King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his throne above all the princes who were with him. ² And All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman; for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage. ³ Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you transgressing the king's command?" ⁴ Now it was when they had spoken daily to him and he would not listen to them, that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew. ⁵ And when Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, Haman was filled with rage. ⁶ But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had made known to him who the people of Mordecai were; therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

⁷ In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, they cast lots) before Haman day after day; and they cast it month after month till the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. ⁸ Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom: their laws are different from those of all other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not to the king's profit to tolerate them. ⁹ If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business, to put into the king's treasuries." ¹⁰ Then the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to



Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. ¹¹ And the king said to Haman, "The silver is yours, and the people also, to do with them as you please."

¹² Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and it was written just as Haman commanded to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province and to the princes of each people, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring. ¹³ Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to plunder their goods. ¹⁴ A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province was published to all the peoples so that they should be ready for that day. ¹⁵ The couriers went out quickly by order of the king while the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

Esther Learns of Haman's Plot

4 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry. ² He went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one was to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth. ³ And in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴ When Esther's young women and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed. And she sent garments to

clothe Mordecai that he might take off his sackcloth from off him, but he did not accept them. ⁵ Then Esther called Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was. ⁶ So Hathach went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king's gate. ⁷ And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸ He also gave him a copy of the written decree which had been issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people.

⁹ And Hathach came back and told Esther the words of Mordecai. ¹⁰ Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a message to 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 to 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 scepter, that he may live. But I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days." ¹² And they told Mordecai the words of Esther.

¹³ Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴ For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Esther Plans to Intervene

¹⁵ Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, ¹⁶ "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my



young women also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.”¹⁷ So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

Esther Plans a Banquet

5 Now it came about on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king’s palace^a in front of the king’s house,^b and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the royal house,^c opposite the entrance to the palace. ²When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favor in his eyes; and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter, which was in his hand. So Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter.

³Then the king said to her, “What is it, Queen Esther? And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be given to you.” ⁴And Esther said, “If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come this day^d to the banquet that I have prepared for him.” ⁵Then the king said, “Bring Haman quickly that we may do the word of Esther.”^e So the king and Haman came to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

⁶And the king said to Esther at the banquet of wine, “What is your petition, for it shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be fulfilled.” ⁷Then Esther answered, “My petition and my request is: ⁸If I have found favor in the eyes of the king, and if it pleases

the king to grant my petition and do my request, may the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do according to the word of the king.”

Haman’s Pride

⁹Then Haman went out that day rejoicing and good of heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king’s gate and that he did not stand up or tremble before him, Haman was filled with rage against Mordecai.¹⁰ Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and brought his friends and his wife Zeresh. ¹¹Then Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his sons, and every instance where the king had magnified him and how he had promoted^f him above the princes and servants of the king.

¹²Haman also said, “Even Esther the queen let no one but me come with the king to the banquet which she had prepared; and tomorrow also I am invited by her^g with the king. ¹³Yet all of this is not suitable to me,^h so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate.” ¹⁴Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, “Let a gallows fifty cubitsⁱ high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it. Then go joyfully with the king to the feast.” This thing pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.

^a Literally “house of the king”

^b Or rooms

^c i.e., throne room

^d “let the king and Haman come this day.” This is the second acrostic of the Tetragrammaton, YHWH, in Esther. **Y**avoh’ **H**ammelech **W**ehaman **H**aiyohm, in Heb.—Appendix 60 From The Companion Bible.

^e i.e., as Esther desires

^f Lit lifted

^g Lit summoned to her

^h “Yet all of this is not suitable to me” Heb., wekhol-zeH `ehmennU showeH’ II. The **U** corresponds to **W** and **I** corresponds to **Y**. This is the third acrostic of the Tetragrammaton, יהוה (YHWH), in Esther.—Appendix 60 From The Companion Bible.

ⁱ A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters



Mordecai Honored By the King

6 During that night the king's sleep fled,^a so he gave an order to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.² And it was found written how Mordecai had reported concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs from the keepers of the threshold who had sought to lay hands on^b King Ahasuerus.^c ³ And the king asked, "What honor and recognition has been given to Mordecai for this?" And the king's servants who attended^d him said, "Nothing has been done for him."⁴ So the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace in order to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the stake^e which he had prepared for him.⁵ And the king's servants said to him, "Behold, Haman is standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."⁶ So Haman came in, the king said to him, "What should be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor?" Haman said in his heart: "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"⁷ So Haman said to the king: "For the man whom the king desires to honor,⁸ let them bring a royal robe^f that the king wears and a horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown^g has been placed;⁹ and let the robe and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble princes and they should clothe the man whom the king desires to honor and have him ride on the horse in the public square of the city, and proclaim before him, 'Thus shall it be done

^a I.e., *could not sleep*

^b I.e., *plotted to assassinate*

^c *Artaxerxes*, LXX

^d *His ministers*; Heb., *mesharethav*

^e *Or gallows*

^f *Lit clothing of the kingdom*

^g *Or headdress*

to the man whom the king delights to honor."

Haman Must Honor Mordecai

¹⁰ Then the king said to Haman, "Take quickly the robes and the horse as you have said, and do so for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the king's gate; do not fall short in anything of all that you have said."¹¹ So Haman took the robe and the horse, and he clothed Mordecai and made him ride in the public square of the city and he proclaimed before him, "This is what is done for the man whom the king desires to honor."

Haman's Apprehension

¹² Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.¹³ And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends all that had happened to him. Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If it is from the seed of the Jews^h that Mordecai is before whom you have begun to fall, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him."

¹⁴ While they were yet talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried to bring Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Esther Exposes Haman

7 Now the king and Haman came to drink wineⁱ with Esther the queen.² And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, "What is your petition, queen Esther? It shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be done."³ Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your eyes, O king, and if it please

^h I.e., *from the descendants of the Jews*

ⁱ *Lit drink*; wine is added to finish the sense of what was drank; in fact, verse 2 shows it was wine at a banquet



the king, let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request; ⁴ for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated. If we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have kept silent, for the enemy could not compensate for the damage to the king.”^a ⁵ Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed in his heart^b to do this?” ⁶ And Esther said, “A foe and enemy is this wicked Haman!” Then Haman became terrified before the king and the queen.

Haman Is Hanged On the Stake He Made

⁷ And the king arose in his anger from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm had been determined against him by the king. ⁸ And the king returned from the palace garden into the house of the banquet of wine;^c and Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. Then said the king, “Will he even rape^d the queen with me in the house?” As the word went out of the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face. ⁹ Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs who were before the king said, “Behold indeed, the gallows standing at Haman’s house fifty cubits high,^e which Haman made

for Mordecai who spoke good on behalf of the king!” And the king said, “Hang him on it.” ¹⁰ So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the anger of the king subsided.

Mordecai Promoted

⁸ On that day King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther; and Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had disclosed what he was to her. ² The king took off his signet ring which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

Esther Pleads With the King

³ Then Esther spoke again to the king, fell at his feet, wept and pleaded with him to avert the evil plan of Haman the Agagite and his plot that he had devised against the Jews. ⁴ The king extended the golden scepter to Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king. ⁵ Then she said, “If it pleases the king and if I have found favor before him and the matter seems right before the king and I am pleasing in his sight, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the provinces of the king. ⁶ For how can I endure to see the calamity which will befall my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?” ⁷ Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, “Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged on the gallows^f because he had stretched out his hands against the Jews.

King Ahasuerus’s Counter Decree

⁸ Now you write to the Jews according to what is good in your own eyes, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king’s

^a NASB95 translates *for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king*.

^b Lit *who has filled him as to his heart*

^c Or house of the wine banquet; i.e., *where they were drinking wine*

^d The Hebrew word *kabash*’ is used; it means “subdue, subject” (Gen. 1:28; Jer. 34:16) but can also mean “rape.” While Haman was not sexually assaulting Esther, nor intending to do so, the context is not what Haman was intending to do but rather what King Ahasuerus was accusing him of doing.

^e About 22.3 m (73 ft).

^f Or *stake*



signet ring; for a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's signet ring may not be revoked."

⁹ So the king's scribes were called at that time in the third month (that is, the month Sivan), on the twenty-third day; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded to the Jews, the satraps, the governors and the princes of the provinces which extended from India to Cush,^a a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, to every province according to its script, and to every people according to their language as well as to the Jews according to their script and their language.¹⁰ And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horses, riding on swift post-horses, the sons of racing mares.¹¹ In them the king granted the Jews who were in each and every city the right to assemble and to stand for their souls,^b and to annihilate, kill, and destroy any forces of any people or province that might attack them, including women and children, and to seize their spoil,¹² on the same day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar.¹³ A copy of the edict to be given as law in each and every province was published to all the peoples, so that the Jews would be ready for that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.¹⁴ The couriers riding the post-horses used in the royal service went out urgently and speedily at the king's command. The law was also issued in Susa the citadel.

Relief and Rejoicing for the Jews

¹⁵ Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue cloth and white linen, and a great crown of gold and a robe of fine white linen and purple, and the city of Susa shouted and

rejoiced.¹⁶ For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor.¹⁷ In each and every province and in each and every city, wherever the king's commandment and his decree arrived, there was gladness and joy for the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many among the peoples of the land became Jews, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them.

Triumph of the Jews as They Destroy Their Enemies

⁹ Now in the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar), on the thirteenth day when the king's command and edict were about to be executed, on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, it was turned to the contrary so that the Jews themselves gained the mastery over those who hated them.² The Jews gathered in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm; and no man could stand before them,^c for the dread of them had fallen upon all the peoples.³ Even all the princes of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and those who were doing the king's business lifted up^d the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai had fallen on them.⁴ For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for the man Mordecai became greater and greater.

⁵ The Jews struck all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, killing and destroying; and they did what they pleased to those who hated them.⁶ At the citadel in Susa the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men,⁷ and also 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

^a I.e., Ethiopia

^b I.e., their lives; Heb. *alnaphsham*

^c Or *and not a man could stand against them*

^d Or *assisted*



enemy of the Jews, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.^a

¹¹ On that day the number of those who were killed at the citadel in Susa came before the king.^b ¹² And the king said to Queen Esther, “The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman at the citadel in Susa. What then have they done in the rest of the king’s provinces! Now what is your petition? It shall even be granted you. And what is your further request? It shall also be done.” ¹³ Then said Esther, “If it pleases the king, let tomorrow also be granted to the Jews who are in Susa to do according to the edict of today; and let Haman’s ten sons be hanged on the gallows.” ¹⁴ So the king commanded that it should be done so; and an edict was issued in Susa, and Haman’s ten sons were hanged. ¹⁵ The Jews who were in Susa gathered also on the fourteenth day of the month Adar and killed three hundred men in Susa, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

¹⁶ Now the rest of the Jews who were in the king’s provinces assembled, to defend their souls and have rest from their enemies,^c and kill seventy-five thousand of those who hated them; but they did not lay their hands on the plunder. ¹⁷ This was done on the thirteenth day of the month Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.

¹⁸ But the Jews who were in Susa gathered on the thirteenth and the fourteenth of the same month, and they rested on the fifteenth day and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing. ¹⁹ Therefore the Jews of the rural areas, who live in the rural towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a rejoicing and feasting and a good day and sending portions of food to one another.

Festival of Purim Established

²⁰ Then Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, ²¹ obliging them to keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same, each and every year, ²² because on those days the Jews had rest from their enemies, and it was a month which was turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a good day;^d that they should make them days of feasting and rejoicing and sending portions of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

²³ Thus the Jews undertook what they had started to do, and what Mordecai had written to them. ²⁴ For Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the adversary of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them and had cast Pur, that is the lot, to panic them and destroy them. ²⁵ But when it came before the king, he commanded by letter that his wicked scheme which he had [b]devised against the Jews, should return on his own head and that he and his sons should be hanged on the stake. ²⁶ Therefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. Therefore because of all the words^e in this letter, both what they had seen in this regard and what had happened to them, ²⁷ the Jews established and received a custom^f for themselves and for their seed^g and for all those who allied themselves with them, so that it should not pass away^h to celebrate these two days according to what was written and according to their appointed time annually. ²⁸ So these days were to be remembered and celebrated throughout every generation, every family, every province and every city; and these days of Purim were not to pass away from

^d I.e., a holiday

^e Or because of the instructions in this letter

^f Or established a custom

^g Or descendants

^h Or they would not fail

^a I.e., they did not seize any plunder

^b Or was reported to the king

^c I.e., got rid of their enemies



among the Jews, or their memory shall not come to an end among their seed.

²⁹Then Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim. ³⁰He sent letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, namely, words of peace and truth, ³¹to establish these days of Purim at their appointed times, just as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had established for them, and just as they had established for their own soul and for their seeds with words for their times of fasting and their lamentations. ³²The command of Esther established these words for Purim, and it was written in the book.

The Greatness of Mordecai

10 Now King Ahasuerus imposed forced labor^a on the land and on the coastlands of the sea. ²And all the acts of his power and his might, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai to which the king made him great, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia? ³For Mordecai the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews and in favor with his many brothers, one who sought the good of his people and one who spoke for the welfare of his offspring.

^a Or laid a tribute; tax