

Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha (RSV)
(1952)

Deuterocanonical Books (Apocrypha)

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Greek Esther 1:1 - 10:13

Greek Esther 1:1 - 1:22

- 1 In the days of Ahasu-e'rus, the Ahasu-e'rus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces,
- 2 in those days when King Ahasu-e'rus sat on his royal throne in Susa the capital,
- 3 in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his princes and servants, the army chiefs [1] of Persia and Media and the nobles and governors of the provinces being before him,
- 4 while he showed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor and pomp of his majesty for many days, a hundred and eighty days.
- 5 And when these days were completed, the king gave for all the people present in Susa the capital, both great and small, a banquet lasting for seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace.
- 6 There were white cotton curtains and blue hangings caught up with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings [2] and marble pillars, and also couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and precious stones.
- 7 Drinks were served in golden goblets, goblets of different kinds, and the royal wine was lavished according to the bounty of the king.
- 8 And drinking was according to the law, no one was compelled; for the king had given orders to all the officials of his palace to do as every man desired.
- 9 Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the palace which belonged to King Ahasu-e'rus.
- 10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehu'man, Biztha, Harbo'na, Bigtha and Abag'tha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who served King Ahasu-e'rus as chamberlains,
- 11 to bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal crown, in order to show the peoples and the princes her beauty; for she was fair to behold.
- 12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command conveyed by the eunuchs. At this the king was enraged, and his anger burned within him.
- 13 Then the king said to the wise men who knew the times — for this was the king's procedure toward all who were versed in law and judgment,

14 the men next to him being Carshe'na, Shethar, Adma'tha, Tarshish, Meres, Marse'na, and Memu'can, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who saw the king's face, and sat first in the kingdom — :

15 "According to the law, what is to be done to Queen Vashti, because she has not performed the command of King Ahasu-e'rus conveyed by the eunuchs?"

16 Then Memu'can said in presence of the king and the princes, "Not only to the king has Queen Vashti done wrong, but also to all the princes and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasu-e'rus.

17 For this deed of the queen will be made known to all women, causing them to look with contempt upon their husbands, since they will say, 'King Ahasu-e'rus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, and she did not come.'

18 This very day the ladies of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's behavior will be telling it to all the king's princes, and there will be contempt and wrath in plenty.

19 If it please the king, let a royal order go forth from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes so that it may not be altered, that Vashti is to come no more before King Ahasu-e'rus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she.

20 So when the decree made by the king is proclaimed throughout all his kingdom, vast as it is, all women will give honor to their husbands, high and low."

21 This advice pleased the king and the princes, and the king did as Memu'can proposed;

22 he sent letters to all the royal provinces, to every province in its own script and to every people in its own language, that every man be lord in his own house and speak according to the language of his people.

Greek Esther 2:1 - 2:23

1 After these things, when the anger of King Ahasu-e'rus had abated, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her.

2 Then the king's servants who attended him said, "Let beautiful young virgins be sought out for the king.

3 And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather all the beautiful young virgins to the harem in Susa the capital, under custody of Hegai the king's eunuch who is in charge of the women; let their ointments be given them.

4 And let the maiden who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.” This pleased the king, and he did so.

5 Now there was a Jew in Susa the capital whose name was Mor'decai, the son of Ja'ir, son of Shim'e-i, 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 had brought up Hadas'sah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother; the maiden was beautiful and lovely, and when her father and her mother died, Mor'decai adopted her as his own daughter.

8 So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many maidens were gathered in Susa the capital in custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegai who had charge of the women.

9 And the maiden pleased him and won his favor; and he quickly provided her with her ointments and her portion of food, and with seven chosen maids from the king's palace, and advanced her and her maids to the best place in the harem.

10 Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mor'decai had charged her not to make it known.

11 And every day Mor'decai walked in front of the court of the harem, to learn how Esther was and how she fared.

12 Now when the turn came for each maiden 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 when the maiden 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 went, and in the morning she came back to the second harem in custody of Sha-ash'gaz the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines; she did not go in to the king again, unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.

15 When the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mor'decai, who had adopted her as his own daughter, to go in to the king, she asked for nothing except what Hegai the king's eunuch, who had charge of the women, advised. Now Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her.

16 And when Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus into his royal palace in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign,

17 the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found grace and favor in his sight 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 to all his princes and servants; it was Esther's banquet. He also granted a remission of taxes [1] to the provinces, and gave gifts with royal liberality.

19 When the virgins were gathered together the second time, Mor'decai was sitting at the king's gate.

20 Now Esther had not made known her kindred or her people, as Mor'decai had charged her; for Esther obeyed Mor'decai just as when she was brought up by him.

21 And in those days, as Mor'decai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasu-e'rus.

22 And this came to the knowledge of Mor'decai, and he told it to Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in the name of Mor'decai.

23 When the affair was investigated and found to be so, the men were both hanged on the gallows. And it was recorded in the Book of the Chronicles in the presence of the king.

Greek Esther 3:1 - 3:15

1 After these things King Ahasu-e'rus promoted Haman the Ag'agite, the son of Hammeda'tha, and advanced him and set his seat 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 did obeisance to Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mor'decai did not bow down or do obeisance.

3 Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mor'decai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?"

4 And when they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mor'decai's words would avail; for he had told them that he was a Jew.

5 And when Haman saw that Mor'decai did not bow down or do obeisance to him, Haman was filled with fury.

6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mor'decai alone. So, as they had made known to him the people of Mor'decai, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mor'decai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasu-e'rus.

7 In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasu-e'rus, they cast Pur, that is the lot, 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 Ahasu-e'rus, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not for the king's profit to tolerate them.

9 If it please 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, that they may put it into the king's treasuries."

10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Ag'agite, the son of Hammeda'tha, the enemy of the Jews.

11 And the king said to Haman, "The money is given to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you."

12 Then the king's secretaries were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king's satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the princes of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language; it was written in the name of King Ahasu-e'rus and sealed with the king's ring.

13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces, to destroy, to slay, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. The King's Letter 13 This is a copy of the letter: "The Great King, Ahasu-e'rus, [1] to the rulers of the hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia and to the governors under them, writes thus: [2] "Having become ruler of many nations and master of the whole world, not elated with presumption of authority but always acting reasonably and with kindness, I have determined to settle the lives of my subjects in lasting tranquillity and, in order to make my kingdom peaceable and open to travel throughout all its extent, to re-establish the peace which all men desire. [3] "When I asked my counselors how this might be accomplished, Haman, who excels among us in sound judgment, and is distinguished for his unchanging good will and steadfast fidelity, and has attained the second place in the kingdom, [4] pointed out to us that among all the nations in the world there is scattered a certain hostile people, who have laws contrary to those of every nation and continually disregard the ordinances of the kings, so that the unifying of the kingdom which we honorably intend cannot be brought about. [5] We understand that this people, and it alone, stands constantly in opposition to all men, perversely following a strange manner of life and laws, and is ill-disposed to our government, doing all the harm they can so that our kingdom may not attain stability. [6] "Therefore we have decreed that those indicated to you in the letters of Haman, who is in charge of affairs and is our second father, shall all, with their wives and children, be utterly destroyed by the sword of their enemies, without pity or mercy, on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month, Adar, of this present year, [7] so that those who have long been and are now hostile may in one day go down in violence to Hades, and leave our government completely secure and untroubled hereafter."

14 A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation to all the peoples to be ready for that day.

15 The couriers went in haste by order of the king, and the decree was issued in Susa the capital. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Susa was perplexed.

Greek Esther 4:1 - 4:17

1 When Mor'decai learned all that had been done, Mor'decai rent his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry;

2 he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

3 And in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mor'decai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them.

5 Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mor'decai to learn what this was and why it was.

6 Hathach went out to Mor'decai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate,

7 and Mor'decai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.

8 Mor'decai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people, "Remembering the days of your lowliness, when you were cared for by me, because Haman, who is next to the king, spoke against us for our destruction. Beseech the Lord and speak to the king concerning us and deliver us from death."

9 And Hathach went and told Esther what Mor'decai had said.

10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mor'decai, saying,

11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law; all alike are to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter that he may live. And I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days."

12 And they told Mor'decai what Esther had said.

13 Then Mor'decai told them to return answer to Esther, "Think not that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews.

14 For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, 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?"

15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mor'decai,

16 "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish."

17 Mor'decai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him. Mordecai's Prayer 13 [8] Then Mor'decai [1] prayed to the Lord, calling to remembrance all the works of the Lord. He said: [9] "O Lord, Lord, King who rulest over all things, for the universe is in thy power and there is no one who can oppose thee if it is thy will to save Israel. [10] For thou hast made heaven and earth and every wonderful thing under heaven, [11] and thou art Lord of all, and there is no one who can resist thee, who art the Lord. [12] Thou knowest all things; thou knowest, O Lord, that it was not in insolence or pride or for any love of glory that I did this, and refused to bow down to this proud Haman. [13] For I would have been willing to kiss the soles of his feet, to save Israel! [14] But I did this, that I might not set the glory of man above the glory of God, and I will not bow down to any one but to thee, who art my Lord; and I will not do these things in pride. [15] And now, O Lord God and King, God of Abraham, spare thy people; for the eyes of our foes are upon us [2] to annihilate us, and they desire to destroy the inheritance that has been thine from the beginning. [16] Do not neglect thy portion, which thou didst redeem for thyself out of the land of Egypt. Hear my prayer, and have mercy upon thy inheritance turn our mourning into feasting, that we may live and sing praise to thy name, O Lord; do not destroy the mouth of those who praise thee." [18] And all Israel cried out mightily, for their death was before their eyes. Esther's Prayer 14 And Esther the queen, seized with deathly anxiety, fled to the Lord; [2] she took off her splendid apparel and put on the garments of distress and mourning, and instead of costly perfumes she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she utterly humbled her body, and every part that she loved to adorn she covered with her tangled hair. [3] And she prayed to the Lord God of Israel, and said: "O my Lord, thou only art our King; help me, who am alone and have no helper but thee, [4] for my danger is in my hand. [5] Ever since I was born I have heard in the tribe of my family that thou, O Lord, didst take Israel out of all the nations, and our fathers from among all their ancestors, for an everlasting inheritance, and that thou didst do for them all that thou didst promise. [6] And now we have sinned before thee, and thou hast given us into the hands of our enemies, [7] because we glorified their gods. Thou art righteous, O Lord! [8] And now they are not satisfied that we are in bitter slavery, but they have covenanted with their idols [9] to abolish what thy mouth has ordained and to destroy thy inheritance, to stop the mouths of those who praise thee and to quench thy altar and the glory of thy house, [10] to open the mouths of the nations for the praise of vain idols, and to magnify for ever a mortal king. [11] O Lord, do not surrender thy scepter to what has no being; and do not let them mock at our downfall; but turn their plan against

themselves, and make an example of the man who began this against us. [12] Remember, O Lord; make thyself known in this time of our affliction, and give me courage, O King of the gods and Master of all dominion! [13] Put eloquent speech in my mouth before the lion, and turn his heart to hate the man who is fighting against us, so that there may be an end of him and those who agree with him. [14] But save us by thy hand, and help me, who am alone and have no helper but thee, O Lord. [15] Thou hast knowledge of all things; and thou knowest that I hate the splendor of the wicked and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of any alien. [16] Thou knowest my necessity — that I abhor the sign of my proud position, which is upon my head on the days when I appear in public. I abhor it like a menstruous rag, and I do not wear it on the days when I am at leisure. And thy servant has not eaten at Haman's table, and I have not honored the king's feast or drunk the wine of the libations. [18] Thy servant has had no joy since the day that I was brought here until now, except in thee, O Lord God of Abraham. [19] O God, whose might is over all, hear the voice of the despairing, and save us from the hands of evildoers. And save me from my fear!"

Greek Esther 5:1 - 5:14

1 On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, opposite the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne inside the palace opposite the entrance to the palace;

2 and when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she found favor in his sight and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the top of the scepter. Esther Is Received by the King **15** On the third day, when she ended her prayer, she took off the garments in which she had worshiped, and arrayed herself in splendid attire. Then, majestically adorned, after invoking the aid of the all-seeing God and Savior, she took her two maids with her, [3] leaning daintily on one, [4] while the other followed carrying her train. [5] She was radiant with perfect beauty, and she looked happy, as if beloved, but her heart was frozen with fear. [6] When she had gone through all the doors, she stood before the king. He was seated on his royal throne, clothed in the full array of his majesty, all covered with gold and precious stones. And he was most terrifying. [7] Lifting his face, flushed with splendor, he looked at her in fierce anger. And the queen faltered, and turned pale and faint, and collapsed upon the head of the maid who went before her. [8] Then God changed the spirit of the king to gentleness, and in alarm he sprang from his throne and took her in his arms until she came to herself. And he comforted her with soothing words, and said to her, [9] "What is it, Esther? I am your brother. Take courage; [10] you shall not die, for our law applies only to the people. [1] Come near." [11] Then he raised the golden scepter and touched it to her neck; [12] and he embraced her, and said, "Speak to me." [13] And she said to him, "I saw you, my lord, like an angel of God and my heart was shaken with fear at your glory. [14] For you are wonderful, my lord, and your countenance is full of grace." [15] But as she was speaking, she fell fainting. [16] And the king was agitated, and all his servants sought to comfort her.

3 And the king said to her, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom."

4 And Esther said, "If it please the king, let the king and Haman come this day to a dinner that I have prepared for the king."

5 Then said the king, "Bring Haman quickly, that we may do as Esther desires." So the king and Haman came to the dinner that Esther had prepared.

6 And as they were drinking wine, the king said to Esther, "What is your petition? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."

7 But Esther 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 fulfil my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow [2] to the dinner which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."

9 And Haman went out that day joyful and glad of heart. But when Haman saw Mor'decai in the king's gate, that he neither rose nor trembled before him, he was filled with wrath against Mor'decai.

10 Nevertheless Haman restrained himself, and went home; and he sent and fetched his friends and his wife Zeresh.

11 And Haman recounted to them the splendor of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honored him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and the servants of the king.

12 And Haman added, "Even Queen Esther let no one come with the king to the banquet she prepared but myself. And tomorrow also I am invited by her together with the king.

13 Yet all this does me no good, so long as I see Mor'decai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

14 Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mor'decai hanged upon it; then go merrily with the king to the dinner." This counsel pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.

Greek Esther 6:1 - 6:14

1 On that night the king could not sleep; and he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.

- 2 And it was found written how Mor'decai had told about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, and who had sought to lay hands upon King Ahasu-e'rus.
- 3 And the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mor'decai for this?" The king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."
- 4 And the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mor'decai hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for him.
- 5 So the king's servants told him, "Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."
- 6 So Haman came in, and the king said to him, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?"
- 7 And Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor,
- 8 let royal robes be brought, which the king has worn, and the horse which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown is set;
- 9 and let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble princes; let him [1] array the man whom the king delights to honor, and let him [2] conduct the man on horseback through the open square of the city, proclaiming before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.'"
- 10 Then the king said to Haman, "Make haste, take the robes and the horse, as you have said, and do so to Mor'decai the Jew who sits at the king's gate. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned."
- 11 So Haman took the robes and the horse, and he arrayed Mor'decai and made him ride through the open square of the city, proclaiming, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor."
- 12 Then Mor'decai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.
- 13 And Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had befallen him. Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mor'decai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of the Jewish people, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."
- 14 While they were yet talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and brought Haman in haste to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

- 1 So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther.
- 2 And on the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."
- 3 Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your 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 be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king."
- 5 Then King Ahasu-e'rus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, that would presume to do this?"
- 6 And Esther said, "A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!" Then Haman was in terror before the king and the queen.
- 7 And the king rose from the feast in wrath and went into the palace garden; but Haman stayed to beg his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king.
- 8 And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was; and the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the words left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face.
- 9 Then said Harbo'na, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, "Moreover, the gallows which Haman has prepared for Mor'decai, whose word saved the king, is standing in Haman's house, fifty cubits high."
- 10 And the king said, "Hang him on that." So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mor'decai. Then the anger of the king abated.

Greek Esther 8:1 - 8:13

- 1 On that day King Ahasu-e'rus gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mor'decai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her;
- 2 and the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mor'decai. And Esther set Mor'decai over the house of Haman.
- 3 Then Esther spoke again to the king; she fell at his feet and besought him with tears to avert the evil design of Haman the Ag'agite and the plot which he had devised against the Jews.

4 And the king held out the golden scepter to Esther,

5 and Esther rose and stood before the king. And she said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and if the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let an order be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman the Ag'agite, the son of Hammeda'tha, 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 that is coming to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"

7 Then King Ahasu-e'rus said to Queen Esther and to Mor'decai the Jew, "Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows, because he would lay hands on the Jews.

8 And you may write as you please with regard to the Jews, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring; for an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring cannot be revoked."

9 The king's secretaries were summoned at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and an edict was written according to all that Mor'decai commanded concerning the Jews to the satraps and the governors and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, to every province in its own script and to every people in its own language, and also to the Jews in their script and their language.

10 The writing was in the name of King Ahasu-e'rus and sealed with the king's ring, and letters were sent by mounted couriers riding on swift horses that were used in the king's service, bred from the royal stud.

11 By these the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives, to destroy, to slay, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, with their children and women, and to plunder their goods,

12 upon one day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasu-e'rus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. The Decree of Ahasu-erus 16 The following is a copy of this letter: "The Great King, Ahasu-e'rus, [1] to the rulers of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven satrapies, and to those who are loyal to our government, greeting. [2] "The more often they are honored by the too great kindness of their benefactors, the more proud do many men become. [3] They not only seek to injure our subjects, but in their inability to stand prosperity they even undertake to scheme against their own benefactors. [4] They not only take away thankfulness from among men, but, carried away by the boasts of those who know nothing of goodness, they suppose that they will escape the evil-hating justice of God, who always sees everything. [5] And often many of those who are set in places of authority have been made in part responsible for the shedding of innocent blood, and have been involved in irremediable calamities, by the persuasion of friends who have been entrusted with the administration of public affairs, [6] when these men by the false trickery of their evil natures beguile the sincere good will of their sovereigns. [7] "What has been wickedly accomplished through the pestilent behavior of those who exercise authority unworthily, can be seen not so much from the more ancient records which we hand on as from investigation of matters close at hand. [8] For

the future we will take care to render our kingdom quiet and peaceable for all men, [9] by changing our methods and always judging what comes before our eyes with more equitable consideration. [10] For Haman, the son of Hammeda'tha, a Macedo'nian (really an alien to the Persian blood, and quite devoid of our kindliness), having become our guest, [11] so far enjoyed the good will that we have for every nation that he was called our father and was continually bowed down to by all as the person second to the royal throne. But, unable to restrain his arrogance, he undertook to deprive us of our kingdom and our life, [13] and with intricate craft and deceit asked for the destruction of Mor'decai, our savior and perpetual benefactor, and of Esther, the blameless partner of our kingdom, together with their whole nation. [14] He thought that in this way he would find us undefended and would transfer the kingdom of the Persians to the Macedo'nians. [15] "But we find that the Jews, who were consigned to annihilation by this thrice accursed man, are not evildoers but are governed by most righteous laws [16] and are sons of the Most High, the most mighty living God, who has directed the kingdom both for us and for our fathers in the most excellent order. [17] "You will therefore do well not to put in execution the letters sent by Haman the son of Hammeda'tha, [18] because the man himself who did these things has been hanged at the gate of Susa, with all his household. For God, who rules over all things, has speedily inflicted on him the punishment he deserved. [19] "Therefore post a copy of this letter publicly in every place, and permit the Jews to live under their own laws. [20] And give them reinforcements, so that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, Adar, on that very day they may defend themselves against those who attack them at the time of their affliction. [21] For God, who rules over all things, has made this day to be a joy to his chosen people instead of a day of destruction for them. [22] "Therefore you shall observe this with all good cheer as a notable day among your commemorative festivals, [23] so that both now and hereafter it may mean salvation for us and the loyal Persians, but that for those who plot against us it may be a reminder of destruction. [24] "Every city and country, without exception, which does not act accordingly, shall be destroyed in wrath with spear and fire. It shall be made not only impassable for men, but also most hateful for all time to beasts and birds."

13 A copy of what was written was to be issued as a decree in every province, and by proclamation to all peoples, and the Jews were to be ready on that day to avenge themselves upon their enemies. [14] So the couriers, mounted on their swift horses that were used in the king's service, rode out in haste, urged by the king's command; and the decree was issued in Susa the capital. [15] Then Mor'decai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a mantle of fine linen and purple, while the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. [16] The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. [17] And in every province and in every city, wherever the king's command and his edict came, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them.

Greek Esther 9:1 - 9:32

1 Now in the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's command and edict were about to be executed, on the very day when the enemies of the Jews

hoped to get the mastery over them, but which had been changed to a day when the Jews should get the mastery over their foes,

2 the Jews gathered in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasu-e'rus to lay hands on such as sought their hurt. And no one could make a stand against them, for the fear of them had fallen upon all peoples.

3 All the princes of the provinces and the satraps and the governors and the royal officials also helped the Jews, for the fear of Mor'decai had fallen upon them.

4 For Mor'decai was great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for the man Mor'decai grew more and more powerful.

5 So the Jews smote all their enemies with the sword, slaughtering, and destroying them, and did as they pleased to those who hated them.

6 In Susa the capital itself the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men,

7 and also slew Parshan-da'tha and Dalphon and Aspa'tha

8 and Pora'tha and Ada'lia and Arida'tha

9 and Parmash'ta and Ar'isai and Ar'idai and Vaiza'tha,

10 the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammeda'tha, the enemy of the Jews; but they laid no hand on the plunder.

11 That very day the number of those slain in Susa the capital was reported to the king.

12 And the king said to Queen Esther, "In Susa the capital the Jews have slain five hundred men and also the ten sons of Haman. What then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces! Now what is your petition? It shall be granted you. And what further is your request? It shall be fulfilled."

13 And Esther said, "If it please the king, let the Jews who are in Susa be allowed tomorrow also to do according to this day's edict. And let the ten sons of Haman be hanged on the gallows."

14 So the king commanded this to be done; a decree was issued in Susa, and the ten sons of Haman were hanged.

15 The Jews who were in Susa gathered also on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and they slew three hundred men in Susa; but they laid no hands on the plunder.

16 Now the other Jews who were in the king's provinces also gathered to defend their lives, and got relief from their enemies, and slew seventy-five thousand of those who hated them; but they laid no hands on the plunder.

17 This was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested and made that a day of feasting and gladness.

18 But the Jews who were in Susa gathered on the thirteenth day and on the fourteenth, and rested on the fifteenth day, making that a day of feasting and gladness.

19 Therefore the Jews of the villages, who live in the open towns, hold the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a day for gladness and feasting and holiday-making, and a day on which they send choice portions to one another.

20 And Mor'decai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasu-e'rus, both near and far,

21 enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same, year by year,

22 as the days on which the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending choice portions to one another and gifts to the poor.

23 So the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mor'decai had written to them.

24 For Haman the Ag'agite, the son of Hammeda'tha, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is the lot, to crush and destroy them;

25 but when Esther came before the king, he gave orders in writing that his wicked plot which he had devised against the Jews should come upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

26 Therefore they called these days Purim, after the term Pur. And therefore, because of all that was written in this letter, and of what they had faced in this matter, and of what had befallen them,

27 the Jews ordained and took it upon themselves and their descendants and all who joined them, that without fail they would keep these two days according to what was written and at the time appointed every year,

28 that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, in every family, province, and city, and that these days of Purim should never fall into disuse among the Jews, nor should the commemoration of these days cease among their descendants.

29 Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Ab'ihail, and Mor'decai the Jew gave full written authority, confirming this second letter about Purim.

30 Letters were sent to all the Jews, to the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasu-e'rus, in words of peace and truth,

31 that these days of Purim should be observed at their appointed seasons, as Mor'decai the Jew and Queen Esther enjoined upon the Jews, and as they had laid down for themselves and for their descendants, with regard to their fasts and their lamenting.

32 The command of Queen Esther fixed these practices of Purim, and it was recorded in writing.

Greek Esther 10:1 - 10:13

1 King Ahasu-e'rus laid tribute on the land and on the coastlands of the sea.

2 And all the acts of his power and might, and the full account of the high honor of Mor'decai, to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

3 For Mor'decai the Jew was next in rank to King Ahasu-e'rus, and he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brethren, for he sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to all his people.

4 And Mor'decai said, "These things have come from God.

5 For I remember the dream that I had concerning these matters, and none of them has failed to be fulfilled.

6 The tiny spring which became a river, and there was light and the sun and abundant water — the river is Esther, whom the king married and made queen.

7 The two dragons are Haman and myself.

8 The nations are those that gathered to destroy the name of the Jews.

9 And my nation, this is Israel, who cried out to God and were saved. The Lord has saved his people; the Lord has delivered us from all these evils; God has done great signs and wonders, which have not occurred among the nations.

10 For this purpose he made two lots, one for the people of God and one for all the nations.

11 And these two lots came to the hour and moment and day of decision before God and among all the nations.

12 And God remembered his people and vindicated his inheritance.

13 So they will observe these days in the month of Adar, on the fourteenth and fifteenth of that month, with an assembly and joy and gladness before God, from generation to generation for ever among his people Israel." Postscript 11 [1] In the fourth year of the reign of Ptol'emy and Cleopatra, Dosith'eus, who

said that he was a priest and a Levite, [1] and Ptol'emy his son brought to Egypt [2] the preceeding Letter of Purim, which they said was genuine and had been translated by Lysim'achus the son of Ptol'emy, one of the residents of Jerusalem.

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