EDIFIED EDITION

Esther

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

10	167	Old	17
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Edified Edition (EDE): a modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek, in everyday British English. www.edifiededition.com

Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

Esther 1 tells how Ahasuerus, who rules a hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India to Cush, gives a banquet for a hundred and eighty days in his third year to display his wealth, and then a seven-day feast in the garden of the palace at Susa, with wine in golden cups. Queen Vashti gives a feast for the women. On the seventh day the merry king orders his seven eunuchs to bring Vashti, wearing her royal crown, to show off her beauty, but she refuses to come. Furious, the king consults his wise men. Memucan warns that her example will make all women despise their husbands, and proposes a royal decree that Vashti never again come before the king and that her position be given to someone better. The king agrees, and letters go out to every province in its own script and language, declaring that every man should be master in his own house.

[1]This happened in the days of Ahasuerus,[1] the Ahasuerus who ruled over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India to Cush.[2]

[2]In those days King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne in the citadel of Susa.

[3]In the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his officials and servants. The army of Persia and Media, the nobles and the governors of the provinces were present before him.

[4]For a hundred and eighty days he displayed the riches of his royal glory and the splendour of his greatness.

[5]When these days were over, the king gave a seven-day banquet in the court of the palace garden for all the people in the citadel of Susa, from the greatest to the least.

[6]There were curtains of white and blue cotton, held by cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings on marble pillars. Couches of gold and silver stood on a pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and costly stone.

7 Drinks were served in golden cups, no two of them alike, and the royal wine flowed freely, as befitted the king's generosity.

8 The drinking was by this rule: no one was to be compelled. The king had instructed all the stewards of his palace to do as each man wished.

9 Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Ahasuerus.

10 On the seventh day, when the king's heart was merry with wine, he told Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who attended King Ahasuerus,

11 to bring Queen Vashti before the king wearing her royal crown, to show the peoples and the officials her beauty, for she was lovely to look at.

12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command brought by the eunuchs. The king became furious, and his anger burned within him.

13 Then the king spoke to the wise men who understood the times, for it was his custom to consult all who knew law and justice.

14 Those closest to him were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memucan, the seven officials of Persia and Media who had access to the king and held the highest rank in the kingdom.

15 "According to the law," he asked, "what is to be done to Queen Vashti, since she has not obeyed the command of King Ahasuerus brought by the eunuchs?"

16 Memucan declared before the king and the officials, "Queen Vashti has wronged not only the king but also all the officials and all the peoples in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.

17 For the queen's conduct will become known to all women, and they will despise their husbands, saying, 'King Ahasuerus ordered Queen Vashti to be brought before him, and she would not come.'

18 This very day the noble ladies of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's conduct will say the same to all the king's officials, and there will be no end of contempt and anger.

19 If it pleases the king, let a royal decree go out from him and be written in the laws of Persia and Media, never to be revoked, 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 When the king's edict is proclaimed throughout his vast kingdom, all women will give honour to their husbands, from the greatest to the least."

21 This advice pleased the king and the officials, and the king did as Memucan proposed.

22 He sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language, that every man should be master in his own house and speak the language of his own people.

1 Known in Greek as Xerxes I, king of Persia 486–465 BC. This book follows the Hebrew text; the additions found in the Greek are not part of it.

2 The upper Nile region.

Chapter 2

Esther 2 tells how, when his anger has subsided, the king remembers Vashti, and his attendants propose gathering all the beautiful young virgins to the citadel of Susa, so that the one who pleases him may become queen. Mordecai, a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, has brought up his orphaned cousin Hadassah, that is, Esther, who is lovely to look at. She is taken to the palace, wins the favour of Hegai the eunuch, and tells no one of her people, as Mordecai has commanded. After twelve months of beauty treatments each young woman goes in to the king. When Esther's turn comes, she asks only for what Hegai advises, and she wins the favour of all. The king loves her more than all the others, sets the royal crown on her head, makes her queen, and gives a great banquet. While Mordecai sits at the king's gate, he learns of a plot by two eunuchs against the king and tells Esther. The men are executed, and the matter is written in the royal chronicles.

1 After these things, when the anger of King Ahasuerus had died down, 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 a search be made for beautiful young virgins for the king.

3 Let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather every beautiful young

virgin to the citadel of Susa, to the women's quarters, under the care of Hegai the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women, and let them be given their beauty treatments.

4 And let the young woman who pleases the king become queen instead of Vashti." This pleased the king, and he did so.

5 Living in the citadel of Susa at that time was a Jew named Mordecai, a Benjaminite, the son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish.[1]

6 He had been[2] carried away from Jerusalem among the captives taken with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had deported.

7 He was bringing up Hadassah,[3] that is, Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was lovely to look at, and when her father and mother died, Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter.

8 When the king's command and edict were proclaimed and many young women were gathered to the citadel of Susa under the care of Hegai, Esther too was taken to the king's palace and put under the care of Hegai, who was in charge of the women.

9 The young woman pleased him and won his favour. He promptly gave her beauty treatments and her portions of food, and seven chosen maids from the king's palace, and he moved her and her maids to the best place in the women's quarters.

10 Esther had not revealed her people or her family, for Mordecai had commanded her not to do so.

11 Every day Mordecai walked up and down in front of the court of the women's quarters, to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her.

12 Each young woman's turn to go in to King Ahasuerus came after she had completed the twelve months laid down for the women, for that was the length of their beauty treatments: six months with oil of myrrh and six with spices and ointments for women.

13 This is how the young woman went in to the king: she was given whatever she asked for to take with her from the women's quarters to the king's palace.

14 In the evening she would go in, and in the morning she would return to the second women's quarters, under the care of Shaashgaz the king's eunuch, who was in charge of the concubines. She did not go in to the king again unless he was delighted with her and she was summoned by name.

15 When the turn came for Esther daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his own daughter, to go in to the king, she asked for nothing except what Hegai the king's eunuch, who was in charge of the women, advised. And Esther won the favour of all who saw her.

16 Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus in his royal palace in the tenth month, the month of Tebeth,[4] in the seventh year of his reign.

17 The king loved Esther above all the other women. She won his favour and approval beyond any of the virgins, and so he crowned her with the royal crown and made her queen in Vashti's place.

18 The king gave a great banquet for all his officials and servants, Esther's banquet. He proclaimed a holiday[5] for the provinces and gave gifts with royal generosity.

19 When the virgins were gathered a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.

20 Esther had still not revealed her family or her people, as Mordecai had commanded her, for she obeyed Mordecai just as she had when he was bringing her up.

21 In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the threshold, became angry and plotted to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

22 Mordecai learned of it and told Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in Mordecai's name.

23 The matter was investigated and found to be true, and both men were impaled on a stake.[6] It was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the king's presence.

1 Kish and Shimei are names from the family of King Saul (1 Samuel 9:1; 2 Samuel 16:5); compare the note at 3:1.

2 Or ‘whose family had been’; the deportation was in 597 BC, over a hundred years before Xerxes.

3 *Hadassah* means ‘myrtle’; the name Esther is probably Persian, ‘star’.

4 December–January, 479–478 BC, the king’s seventh year.

5 Or ‘a remission of taxes’.

6 Or ‘hanged on a gallows’; so also in 5:14, 7:9–10, 8:7 and 9:13–14, 25.

Chapter 3

Esther 3 tells how the king promotes Haman the Agagite above all his officials, and all the king’s servants bow to him, but Mordecai will not. When Haman learns that Mordecai is a Jew, he resolves to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom. He has the lot, called Pur, cast before him to find the day, and it falls on the month of Adar. He tells the king that a certain people, scattered among the nations, keep their own laws and not the king’s, and he offers ten thousand talents of silver for their destruction. The king gives him his signet ring. Letters are written in the king’s name and sent to every province, ordering that all Jews, young and old, women and children, be killed in a single day, the thirteenth of Adar, and their goods plundered. The king and Haman sit down to drink, but the city of Susa is in confusion.

1 Some time later King Ahasuerus raised Haman
son of Hammedatha the Agagite[1] to high office,
giving him a seat above all the other officials.

2 All the king’s servants at the king’s gate would
kneel and bow down to Haman, for so the king
had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai
would not kneel or bow down.

3 Then the king’s servants at the king’s gate said
to Mordecai, “Why do you disobey the king’s
command?”

4 Day after day they spoke to him, but he would
not listen to them, so they told Haman, to see
whether Mordecai’s words would stand, for he
had told them that he was a Jew.

5 When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel
or bow down to him, he was filled with rage.

6 But he scorned the idea of laying hands on
Mordecai alone, for they had told him who
Mordecai’s people were. So Haman sought to
destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai,
throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

7 In Nisan, the first month of King Ahasuerus’
twelfth year,[2] Pur, that is, the lot, was cast before
Haman for each day and each month, until it
reached Adar, the twelfth month.

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 every other
people, and they do not keep the king’s laws. It is
not in the king’s interest to tolerate them.

9 If it pleases the king, let an order be written for
their destruction. I will weigh out ten thousand
talents of silver[3] to the officials in charge of the
work, for the royal treasury.”

10 The king pulled off his signet ring and handed it
to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the
Jews’ enemy.

11 “The silver is yours,” the king said to Haman,
“and the people too, to do with them as you
please.”

12 On the thirteenth day of the first month the
king’s secretaries were summoned. An order was
written, just as Haman commanded, to the king’s
satraps, to the governors over each province and
to the officials of each people, to each province in
its own script and to each people in its own
language. It was written in the name of King
Ahasuerus and sealed with the king’s ring.

13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king’s
provinces, ordering the destruction, killing and
annihilation of all the Jews, young and old,
children and women, in a single day, the
thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of
Adar, and the plundering of their goods.

14 A copy of the document was to be issued as law
in every province and published to all the peoples,
so that they would be ready for that day.

15 Urged on by the king’s command, the couriers
set out, and the decree was published in the
citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to
drink, while the city of Susa reeled in confusion.

1 Probably a descendant of Agag, the Amalekite king defeated by Saul son of Kish (1 Samuel 15), so the old conflict is taken up again; compare Exodus 17:14–16.

2 474 BC.

3 About 340 tonnes.

Chapter 4

Esther 4 tells how Mordecai tears his clothes, puts on sackcloth and ashes, and cries out bitterly through the city, and the Jews in every province mourn and fast. Esther, in great distress, sends clothes, but he refuses them. Through Hathach the eunuch he tells her everything, sends her a copy of the decree, and charges her to go to the king and plead for her people. Esther replies that anyone who goes to the king uninvited is put to death unless he holds out his golden sceptre, and she has not been called for thirty days. Mordecai answers that she will not escape because she is in the palace: if she keeps silent, relief will come for the Jews from another place, but she and her family will perish, and who knows whether she has become queen for such a moment as this? Esther asks all the Jews in Susa to fast for three days, as she and her maids will do, and says that she will go to the king, against the law, and if she perishes, she perishes.

1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done,
he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes,
and went out into the middle of the city, crying out
with a loud and bitter cry.

2 He went only as far as the king's gate,
for no one was allowed to enter the king's gate wearing
sackcloth.

3 Throughout the provinces, wherever the king's
order and decree reached, the Jews mourned
deeply, fasting, weeping and wailing, and many
made their beds of sackcloth and ashes.

4 When Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told
her, the queen was in great anguish. She sent
clothes for Mordecai to wear instead of his
sackcloth, but he would not accept them.

5 Esther then called for Hathach, a eunuch the
king had appointed to wait on her, and sent him to
Mordecai to find out what was wrong and why.

6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city
square in front of the king's gate.

7 Mordecai told him everything that had happened
to him, and exactly how much silver Haman had
promised to pay into the king's treasury to have
the Jews destroyed.

8 He also gave him a copy of the written decree
issued in Susa for their destruction, to show to
Esther and explain to her. He told him to charge
her to go to the king to beg for mercy and plead
with him for her people.

9 Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai
had said.

10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him this
message for Mordecai:

11 "All the king's servants and the people of the
king's provinces know that for any man or woman
who goes to the king in the inner court without
being called, there is one law: that person is to be
put to death, unless the king holds out the golden
sceptre, so that he may live. And I have not been
called to go to the king for thirty days."

12 When Esther's words were reported to
Mordecai,

13 he sent back this answer to Esther: "Do not
imagine that because you are in the king's palace
you alone of all the Jews will escape.

14 For if you keep silent at this time, relief and
rescue will arise for the Jews from another place,[1]
but you and your father's family will perish. And
who knows whether it was for such a moment as
this that you came to be queen?"

15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai:

16 "Go and 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 maids will fast in the same
way. Then I will go to the king, though it is against
the law, and if I perish, I perish."

17 So Mordecai went away and did all that Esther
had commanded him.

1 God is not named anywhere in this book, though many see His hidden hand in phrases like this.

Chapter 5

Esther 5 tells how, on the third day, Esther puts on her royal robes and stands in the inner court. The king holds out the golden sceptre and offers her anything, up to half the kingdom. She invites the king and Haman to a banquet, and there she invites them to another the next day, when she will make her request. Haman goes out happy, but seeing Mordecai at the king's gate, who will neither rise nor tremble before him, he is filled with rage. At home he boasts to his friends and his wife Zeresh of his wealth, his sons and his honours, and of being the only guest at the queen's banquet, yet all this means nothing to him while Mordecai sits at the gate. They advise him to have a stake set up fifty cubits high and to ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai impaled on it, and Haman has the stake made.

1 On the third day Esther put on her royal robes
and stood in the inner court of the king's palace,
facing the king's hall. The king was sitting on his
royal throne in the throne room, opposite the
entrance.
2 When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the
court, she won his favour, and he held out to her
the golden sceptre that was in his hand. Esther
came near and touched the tip of the sceptre.
3 The king said to her, "What is it, Queen Esther?
What is your request? Even if it is up to half the
kingdom, it will be given you."
4 "If it pleases the king," Esther said, "let the king
and Haman come today to the banquet I have
prepared for him."
5 "Bring Haman quickly," the king said, "so that we
may do what Esther says." So the king and Haman
went to the banquet Esther had prepared.
6 As they drank wine, the king said to Esther,
"What is your petition? It will be granted you.
What is your request? Even if it is up to half the
kingdom, it will be done."
7 Esther answered, "My petition and my request is
this:
8 if I have found favour with the king, and if it
pleases the king to grant my petition and do what
I request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow
to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will
do as the king says."
9 Haman went out that day happy and in high
spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's
gate, and that he neither rose nor trembled before
him, Haman was filled with rage against
Mordecai.
10 Nevertheless Haman controlled himself and
went home. He sent for his friends and his wife
Zeresh,
11 and Haman told them of the splendour of his
wealth, of his many sons, of all the ways the king
had promoted him, and of how he had raised him
above the officials and the king's servants.
12 "What is more," Haman said, "Queen Esther
brought no one but me to the banquet she
prepared with the king, and tomorrow too I am
invited by her together with the king.
13 Yet all this means nothing to me as long as I see
Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."
14 Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to
him, "Have a stake set up, fifty cubits high,[1] and in
the morning tell the king to have Mordecai
impaled on it. Then go happily with the king to the
banquet." This idea pleased Haman, and he had
the stake set up.

1 About 22 metres (75 feet).

Chapter 6

Esther 6 tells how, on that night, the king cannot sleep and has the royal chronicles read to him. He hears how Mordecai exposed the plot against him and learns that nothing was done to reward him. Haman arrives in the outer court to ask for Mordecai's death, and the king asks him what should be done for the man he delights to honour. Thinking that the king means him, Haman proposes a royal robe, a royal horse and a noble to lead the man through the city square proclaiming his honour. The king tells him to do all this for Mordecai the Jew. Haman has to lead Mordecai through the square, calling out before him, and then hurries home in mourning. His wise men and his wife Zeresh warn him that if Mordecai is of Jewish descent, he will surely fall before him. While they are speaking, the king's eunuchs arrive to hurry him to Esther's banquet.

1 That night the king could not sleep. He ordered
the book of records, the chronicles, to be brought,
and they were read before the king.
2 There it was found written how Mordecai had
reported Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's
eunuchs who guarded the threshold, who had
plotted to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.
3 "What honour or distinction has been given to
Mordecai for this?" the king asked. "Nothing has
been done for him," said the king's attendants
who served him.
4 The king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman
had just entered the outer court of the king's
palace to ask the king to have Mordecai impaled
on the stake he had prepared for him.
5 "Haman is standing in the court," the king's
attendants told him. "Let him come in," said the
king.
6 So Haman came in, and the king said to him,
"What should be done for the man the king
delights to honour?" Haman said to himself,
"Whom would the king delight to honour more
than me?"
7 He answered the king, "For the man the king
delights to honour,
8 let royal robes be brought that the king has
worn, and a horse the king has ridden, with a
royal crown[1] on its head.
9 Let the robes and the horse be handed over to
one of the king's most noble officials. Let them
dress the man the king delights to honour, lead
him on the horse through the city square and
proclaim before him, 'This is what is done for the
man the king delights to honour!'"
10 "Be quick," the king told Haman. "Take the
robes and the horse, just as you said, and do all
this for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's
gate. See that nothing you have mentioned is left
out."
11 So Haman took the robes and the horse. He
dressed Mordecai, led him on horseback through
the city square and proclaimed before him, "This
is what is done for the man the king delights to
honour!"
12 Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate, but
Haman hurried home, mourning and with his head
covered.
13 Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends
everything that had happened to him. His wise
men and Zeresh said, "You have begun to fall
before Mordecai. If he is of Jewish descent, you
cannot prevail against him; you will surely fall."
14 While they were still talking with him, the king's
eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the
banquet Esther had prepared.

1 Persian reliefs show royal horses wearing a crest or crown.

Chapter 7

Esther 7 tells how, at the second banquet, the king again asks Esther for her petition. She pleads for her life and the life of her people, who have been sold to be destroyed, and when the king asks who has dared to do this, she names Haman, her enemy. The king rises in fury and goes into the garden, and Haman stays to beg the queen for his life. When the king returns, Haman has fallen on the couch where Esther is, and the king asks whether he means to assault the queen in his own house. They cover Haman's face. Harbona mentions the stake fifty cubits high that Haman set up for Mordecai, and the king orders Haman to be impaled on it. So Haman is impaled on the stake he prepared for Mordecai, and the king's anger subsides.

1 So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen
Esther.
2 On this second day too, as they drank wine, the
king said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen
Esther? It will be granted you. What is your
request? Even if it is up to half the kingdom, it will
be done."
3 Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favour
with you, O king, and if it pleases 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, killed and annihilated. If we had merely
been sold as male and female slaves, I would have
kept silent, for such distress would not be worth
troubling the king."[1]
5 King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is
he, and where is he, who has dared to do such a
thing?"

6 “An adversary and enemy,” Esther answered,
“this wicked Haman!” And Haman stood terrified
before the king and queen.

7 The king rose in his rage from the wine and went
out to the palace garden. But Haman stayed
behind to beg Queen Esther for his life, for he saw
that the king had determined his ruin.

8 When the king came back from the palace garden
to the banquet hall, Haman had fallen on the
couch where Esther was reclining. The king said,
“Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in
my own house?” As soon as the words left the
king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face.

9 Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the
king, said, “Look, there is a stake fifty cubits high
standing at Haman’s house, which he made for
Mordecai, who spoke up for the good of the king.”
“Impale him on it!” said the king.

10 So they impaled Haman on the stake he had
prepared for Mordecai, and the king’s anger
subsided.

1 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain; or ‘but the enemy cannot make up for the king’s loss’.

Chapter 8

Esther 8 tells how the king gives Haman’s estate to Esther and his signet ring to Mordecai, whom Esther sets over the estate. Esther falls at the king’s feet and begs him to undo Haman’s plot against the Jews, for she cannot bear to see her people destroyed. Since a decree sealed with the king’s ring cannot be revoked, the king tells Esther and Mordecai to write a new one. On the twenty-third of Sivan letters go out in every script and language, on swift royal horses, allowing the Jews in every city to gather and defend themselves on the thirteenth of Adar and to destroy any force that attacks them. Mordecai goes out from the king’s presence in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown. The city of Susa shouts for joy, the Jews have light and gladness, and many of the peoples of the land declare themselves Jews, for fear of the Jews has fallen on them.

1 That same day King Ahasuerus gave Queen
Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the
Jews, and Mordecai came before the king, for
Esther had told him how he was related to her.

2 The king took off his signet ring, which he had
recovered from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai.
And Esther put Mordecai in charge of the house of
Haman.

3 Esther spoke to the king again. She fell at his
feet, weeping, and begged him to put an end to
the evil of Haman the Agagite and the plot he had
devised against the Jews.

4 The king held out the golden sceptre to Esther,
and she rose and stood before the king.

5 “If it pleases the king,” she said, “and if I have
found favour with him, and if the thing seems
right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let
an order be written to revoke the letters devised
by Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which
he wrote to destroy the Jews in all the king’s
provinces.

6 For how can I bear to see the disaster that will
come on my people? How can I bear to see the
destruction of my family?”

7 King Ahasuerus answered Queen Esther and
Mordecai the Jew, “I have given Esther Haman’s
house, as you see, and he has been impaled on the
stake for trying to lay hands on the Jews.

8 Now you write as you see fit concerning the Jews,
in the king’s name, and seal it with the king’s ring,
for a document written in the king’s name and
sealed with the king’s ring cannot be revoked.”

9 At that time, on the twenty-third day of the third
month, the month of Sivan,[1] the king’s secretaries
were summoned. An order was written, just as
Mordecai commanded, to the Jews and to the
satraps, the governors and the officials of the
provinces from India to Cush, a hundred and
twenty-seven provinces, to each province in its
own script and to each people in its own language,
and to the Jews in their own script and language.

10 The letters were written in King Ahasuerus’
name and sealed with his ring, and mounted
couriers took them, riding swift horses from the
royal stables.[2]

11 The king allowed the Jews in every city to gather
and defend their lives, to destroy, kill and
annihilate any armed force of any people or
province that attacked them, with their children
and women, and to plunder their goods,[3]

12 on a single day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

13 A copy of the document was to be issued as law in every province and published to all the peoples, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to take revenge on their enemies.

14 The couriers, riding the royal horses, went out in haste, urged on by the king's command, and the decree was issued in the citadel of Susa.

15 Mordecai went out from the king's presence in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a cloak of fine linen and purple, and the city of Susa shouted for joy.

16 For the Jews there was light and gladness, joy and honour.

17 In every province and in every city, wherever the king's command and decree arrived, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many of the peoples of the land declared themselves Jews, for fear of the Jews had fallen on them.

1 May–June.

2 The meaning of the last words of the Hebrew is uncertain; so also in verse 14.

3 The wording deliberately repeats Haman's decree at 3:13. Compare 9:10, 15–16, where the Jews do not touch the plunder.

Chapter 9

Esther 9 tells how, on the thirteenth of Adar, the day their enemies hoped to overpower them, the tables are turned and the Jews overpower those who hate them. They gather in their cities, the officials support them for fear of Mordecai, and no one can stand against them. In the citadel of Susa they kill five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman, but they do not touch the plunder. At Esther's request the king allows a second day in Susa, and Haman's sons are impaled on the stake. Elsewhere the Jews kill seventy-five thousand of their enemies, and rest on the fourteenth with feasting, while those in Susa rest on the fifteenth. Mordecai writes to all the Jews to keep these two days each year as days of feasting, of sending portions to one another and of gifts to the poor, for sorrow has been turned to joy. The days are called Purim, after the Pur that Haman cast. The Jews bind themselves and their descendants to keep them, and Esther confirms this in a second letter.

1 On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the king's command and decree were to be carried out. On the very day when the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, the tables were turned, and the Jews overpowered those who hated them.

2 The Jews gathered in their cities in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. No one could stand against them, for fear of them had fallen on all the peoples.

3 All the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and the king's administrators supported the Jews, for fear of Mordecai had fallen on them.

4 For Mordecai was great in the king's palace, and his fame spread through all the provinces, as the man Mordecai grew more and more powerful.

5 The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and they did as they pleased to those who hated them.

6 Five hundred men died at the hands of the Jews in the citadel of Susa alone.

7 They also killed Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,

8 Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,

9 Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizatha,

10 the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. But they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

11 That same day the number of those killed in the citadel of Susa was reported to the king.

12 Then the king said to Queen Esther, "Five hundred men and Haman's ten sons have been killed and destroyed by the Jews in the citadel of Susa. What will they have done in the king's other provinces? Now what is your petition? It will be granted you. What further request do you have? It will be done."

13 "If it pleases the king," Esther answered, "let the Jews in Susa be allowed tomorrow also to act according to today's decree, and let the ten sons of Haman be impaled on the stake."[1]

14 The king ordered this to be done. A decree was issued in Susa, and the ten sons of Haman were impaled.

15 The Jews in Susa gathered again on the
fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed
three hundred men in Susa, but they did not lay a
hand on the plunder.

16 The rest of the Jews in the king's provinces
gathered to defend their lives and had relief from
their enemies. They killed seventy-five thousand of
those who hated them, but they did not lay a hand
on the plunder.

17 All this took place on the thirteenth of Adar. On
the fourteenth they rested, making it a day of
feasting and joy.

18 But the Jews in Susa gathered on the thirteenth
and fourteenth days, and on the fifteenth they
rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.

19 That is why the Jews in the country, who live in
the unwalled towns, keep the fourteenth day of
the month of Adar as a day of joy and feasting, a
holiday, on which they send portions to one
another.

20 Mordecai recorded these events and sent letters
to all the Jews in all the provinces of King
Ahasuerus, near and far,

21 charging them to keep the fourteenth and
fifteenth days of the month of Adar every year,

22 as the days on which the Jews had relief from
their enemies, and as the month when their
sorrow was turned to joy and their mourning into
a holiday. They were to keep them as days of
feasting and joy, sending portions to one another
and gifts to the poor.

23 So the Jews took on as a custom what they had
begun to do, as Mordecai had written to them.

24 For Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the
enemy of every Jew, had laid a plot against them
to destroy them. He had cast Pur, the lot, to crush
them and wipe them out.

25 But when it came before the king,[2] he ordered
by letter that the evil plot Haman had devised
against the Jews should come back on his own
head, and that he and his sons should be impaled
on the stake.

26 So these days were called Purim, after the word
Pur.[3] Because of all that was written in this letter,
and what they had seen in this matter and what
had happened to them,

27 the Jews established and took on themselves,
their descendants and all who joined them, as an
unbreakable rule, to keep these two days every
year, in the manner written and at the appointed
time.

28 These days were to be remembered and kept in
every generation, in every family, province and
city, and these days of Purim were never to cease
among the Jews, nor their memory fade from their
descendants.

29 Then Queen Esther daughter of Abihail, with
Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to
confirm this second letter about Purim.

30 Letters went out to all the Jews in the hundred
and twenty-seven provinces of Ahasuerus'
kingdom, with words of peace and truth,

31 to establish these days of Purim at their
appointed times, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen
Esther had established them, and as the Jews had
established for themselves and their descendants
the matters of their fasts and lamenting.

32 Esther's command confirmed these matters of
Purim, and it was recorded in writing.

1 They were already dead (verse 10); their bodies were to be displayed.

2 Or 'when she came before the king'.

3 *Purim* is the plural of *pur*, 'lot'; the Jewish festival is still kept today.

Chapter 10

> *Esther 10 closes the book with the greatness of King Ahasuerus, who imposes tribute on the land and the coasts of the sea, and of Mordecai the Jew. His acts and Mordecai's rise are recorded in the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia. Mordecai is second only to the king, great among the Jews, held in esteem by his many kinsmen, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his descendants.*

1 King Ahasuerus imposed tribute on the land and
on the coasts of the sea.

2 All his powerful and mighty acts, and the full
account of the greatness of Mordecai, to which
the king had raised him, are recorded in the book
of the chronicles of the kings of Media and
Persia.[1]

3 For Mordecai the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus. He was great among the Jews and well loved by his many kinsmen, for he sought the good of his people and spoke peace to all his descendants.

1 This record has not survived.