Esther 1

1Now in the days of Ahasuerus (this is Ahasuerus who reigned from India even to Ethiopia, over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces), 2in those days, when the King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Susa the palace, 3in the third year of his reign, he made a feast for all his princes and his servants; the army of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces being before him. 4He displayed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even one hundred and eighty days.

5When these days were fulfilled, the king made a seven day feast for all the people who were present in Susa the palace, both great and small, in the court of the garden of the king’s palace. 6There were hangings of white and blue material, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and marble pillars. The couches were of gold and silver, on a pavement of red, white, yellow, and black marble. 7They gave them drinks in golden vessels of various kinds, including royal wine in abundance, according to the bounty of the king. 8In accordance with the law, the drinking was not compulsory; for so the king had instructed all the officials of his house, that they should do according to every man’s pleasure.

9Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to King Ahasuerus.

10On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcass, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, 11to bring Vashti the queen before the king wearing the royal crown, to show the people and the princes her beauty; for she was beautiful. 12But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king’s commandment by the eunuchs. Therefore the king was very angry, and his anger burnt in him.

13Then the king said to the wise men, who knew the times (for it was the king’s custom to consult those who knew law and judgement; 14and next to him were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who saw the king’s face, and sat first in the kingdom), 15“What shall we do to Queen Vashti according to law, because she has not done the bidding of the King Ahasuerus by the eunuchs?”

16Memucan answered before the king and the princes, “Vashti the queen has not done wrong to just the king, but also to all the princes, and to all the people who are in all the provinces of the King Ahasuerus. 17For this deed of the queen will become known to all women, causing them to show contempt for their husbands when it is reported, ‘King Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she didn’t come.’ 18Today, the princesses of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen’s deed will tell all the king’s princes. This will cause much contempt and wrath.

19“If it pleases the king, let a royal commandment go from him, and let it be written amongst the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it cannot be altered, that Vashti may never again come before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate to another who is better than she. 20When the king’s decree which he shall make is published throughout all his kingdom (for it is great), all the wives will give their husbands honour, both great and small.”

21This advice pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan: 22 for he sent letters into all the king’s provinces, into every province according to its writing, and to every people in their language, that every man should rule his own house, speaking in the language of his own people.

*The book of Esther in the Greek Septuagint contains 5 additions that the traditional Hebrew text doesn’t have. These additions are recognised as Deuterocanonical Scripture by the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Russian Orthodox Churches. Those additions are enclosed in [square brackets]. Because the additions by themselves make little sense without the broader context of the book, we present here a translation of the whole book of Esther from the Greek.*

*We have chosen not to distract the reader with confusing out-of-order chapter numbers that would result from using the KJV versification, but rather merge these 5 additions as extensions at the beginning of 1:1 and after 3:13, 4:17, 8:12, and 10:3. This makes some verses (1:1, 5:1, and 8:12) really long, but it also makes the verses line up with the same verse numbers in Esther as translated from the traditional Hebrew text. Some of the proper names in this book have been changed to the more familiar Hebrew form instead of the direct transliteration from the Greek.*

Greek Esther 1

1[In the second year of the reign of Ahasuerus the great king, on the first day of Nisan, Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Jew dwelling in the city Susa, a great man, serving in the king’s palace, saw a vision. Now he was one of the captives whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried captive from Jerusalem with Jeconiah the king of Judea. This was his dream: Behold, voices and a noise, thunders and earthquake, tumult upon the earth. And, behold, two great serpents came out, both ready for conflict. A great voice came from them. Every nation was prepared for battle by their voice, even to fight against the nation of the just. Behold, a day of darkness and blackness, suffering and anguish, affection and tumult upon the earth. And all the righteous nation was troubled, fearing their own afflictions. They prepared to die, and cried to God. Something like a great river from a little spring with much water, came from their cry. Light and the sun arose, and the lowly were exalted, and devoured the honourable.

Mordecai, who had seen this vision and what God desired to do, having arisen, kept it in his heart, and desired by all means to interpret it, even until night.

Mordecai rested quietly in the palace with Gabatha and Tharrha the king’s two chamberlains, eunuchs who guarded the palace. He heard their conversation and searched out their plans. He learnt that they were preparing to lay hands on King Ahasuerus; and he informed the king concerning them. The king examined the two chamberlains. They confessed, and were led away and executed. The king wrote these things for a record. Mordecai also wrote concerning these matters. The king commanded Mordecai to serve in the palace, and gave gifts for this service. But Haman the son of Hammedatha the Bougean was honoured in the sight of the king, and he endeavored to harm Mordecai and his people, because of the king’s two chamberlains.]

And it came to pass after these things in the days of Ahasuerus, —(this Ahasuerus ruled over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India)— 2in those days, when King Ahasuerus was on the throne in the city of Susa, 3in the third year of his reign, he made a feast for his friends, for people from the rest of the nations, for the nobles of the Persians and Medes, and for the chief of the local governors. 4After this—after he had shown them the wealth of his kingdom and the abundant glory of his wealth during one hundred and eighty days— 5when the days of the wedding feast were completed, the king made a banquet lasting six days for the people of the nations who were present in the city, in the court of the king’s house, 6which was adorned with fine linen and flax on cords of fine linen and purple, fastened to golden and silver studs on pillars of white marble and stone. There were golden and silver couches on a pavement of emerald stone, and of mother-of-pearl, and of white marble, with transparent coverings variously flowered, having roses arranged around it. 7There were gold and silver cups, and a small cup of carbuncle set out, of the value of thirty thousand talents, with abundant and sweet wine, which the king himself drank. 8This banquet was not according to the appointed law, but as the king desired to have it. He charged the stewards to perform his will and that of the company.

9Also Vashti the queen made a banquet for the women in the palace where King Ahasuerus lived. 10Now on the seventh day, the king, being merry, told Haman, Bazan, Tharrha, Baraze, Zatholtha, Abataza, and Tharaba, the seven chamberlains, servants of King Ahasuerus, 11to bring in the queen to him, to enthrone her, and crown her with the diadem, and to show her to the princes, and her beauty to the nations, for she was beautiful. 12But queen Vashti refused to come with the chamberlains; so the king was grieved and angered. 13And he said to his friends, “This is what Vashti said. Therefore pronounce your legal judgement on this case.”

14So Arkesaeus, Sarsathaeus, and Malisear, the princes of the Persians and Medes, who were near the king, who sat chief in rank by the king, drew near to him, 15and reported to him according to the laws what it was proper to do to queen Vashti, because she had not done the things commanded by the king through the chamberlains. 16And Memucan said to the king and to the princes, “Queen Vashti has not wronged the king only, but also all the king’s rulers and princes; 17for he has told them the words of the queen, and how she disobeyed the king. As she then refused to obey King Ahasuerus, 18so this day the other wives of the chiefs of the Persians and Medes, having heard what she said to the king, will dare in the same way to dishonour their husbands. 19If then it seems good to the king, let him make a royal decree, and let it be written according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, and let him not alter it: ‘Don’t allow the queen to come in to him any more. Let the king give her royalty to a woman better than she.’ 20Let the law of the king which he will have made be widely proclaimed in his kingdom. Then all the women will give honour to their husbands, from the poor even to the rich.” 21This advice pleased the king and the princes; and the king did as Memucan had said, 22and sent into all his kingdom through the several provinces, according to their language, so that men might be feared in their own houses.

Esther 2

1After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus was pacified, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. 2Then the king’s servants who served him said, “Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king. 3Let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the beautiful young virgins to the citadel of Susa, to the women’s house, to the custody of Hegai the king’s eunuch, keeper of the women. Let cosmetics be given them; 4and let the maiden who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.” The thing pleased the king, and he did so.

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

8So, when the king’s commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together to the citadel of Susa, to the custody of Hegai, Esther was taken into the king’s house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. 9The maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness from him. He quickly gave her cosmetics and her portions of food, and the seven choice maidens who were to be given her out of the king’s house. He moved her and her maidens to the best place in the women’s house. 10Esther had not made known her people nor her relatives, because Mordecai had instructed her that she should not make it known. 11Mordecai walked every day in front of the court of the women’s house, to find out how Esther was doing, and what would become of her.

12Each young woman’s turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after her purification for twelve months (for so were the days of their purification accomplished, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet fragrances and with preparations for beautifying women). 13The young woman then came to the king like this: whatever she desired was given her to go with her out of the women’s house to the king’s house. 14In the evening she went, and on the next day she returned into the second women’s house, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king’s eunuch, who kept the concubines. She came in to the king no more, unless the king delighted in her, and she was called by name.

15Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, came to go in to the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king’s eunuch, the keeper of the women, advised. Esther obtained favour in the sight of all those who looked at her.

16So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus into his royal house in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. 17The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she obtained favour and kindness 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.

18Then the king made a great feast for all his princes and his servants, even Esther’s feast; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces, and gave gifts according to the king’s bounty.

19When the virgins were gathered together the second time, Mordecai was sitting in the king’s gate. 20Esther had not yet made known her relatives nor her people, as Mordecai had commanded her; for Esther obeyed Mordecai, like she did when she was brought up by him. 21In those days, while Mordecai was sitting in the king’s gate, two of the king’s eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, who were doorkeepers, were angry, and sought to lay hands on the King Ahasuerus. 22This thing became known to Mordecai, who informed Esther the queen; and Esther informed the king in Mordecai’s name. 23 When this matter was investigated, and it was found to be so, they were both hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the king’s presence.

Greek Esther 2

1After this, the king’s anger was pacified, and he no more mentioned Vashti, bearing in mind what she had said, and how he had condemned her. 2Then the servants of the king said, “Let chaste, beautiful young virgins be sought for the king. 3Let the king appoint local governors in all the provinces of his kingdom, and let them select beautiful, chaste young ladies and bring them to the city Susa, into the women’s apartment. Let them be consigned to the king’s chamberlain, the keeper of the women. Then let things for purification and other needs be given to them. 4Let the woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.”

This thing pleased the king; and he did so.

5Now there was a Jew in the city Susa, and his name was Mordecai, the son of Jairus, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin. 6He had been brought as a prisoner from Jerusalem, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried into captivity. 7He had a foster child, daughter of Aminadab his father’s brother. Her name was Esther. When her parents died, he brought her up to womanhood as his own. This lady was beautiful. 8And because the king’s ordinance was published, many ladies were gathered to the city of Susa under the hand of Hegai; and Esther was brought to Hegai, the keeper of the women. 9The lady pleased him, and she found favour in his sight. He hurried to give her the things for purification, her portion, and the seven maidens appointed her out of the palace. He treated her and her maidens well in the women’s apartment. 10But Esther didn’t reveal her family or her kindred, for Mordecai had charged her not to tell. 11But Mordecai used to walk every day by the women’s court, to see what would become of Esther.

12Now this was the time for a virgin to go into the king, when she had completed twelve months; for so are the days of purification fulfilled, six months while they are anointing themselves with oil of myrrh, and six months with spices and women’s purifications. 13And then the lady goes in to the king. The officer that he commands to do so will bring her to come in with him from the women’s apartment to the king’s chamber. 14She enters in the evening, and in the morning she departs to the second women’s apartment, where Hegai the king’s chamberlain is keeper of the women. She doesn’t go in to the king again, unless she is called by name. 15And when the time was fulfilled for Esther the daughter of Aminadab the brother of Mordecai’s father to go in to the king, she neglected nothing which the chamberlain, the women’s keeper, commanded; for Esther found grace in the sight of all who looked at her. 16So Esther went in to King Ahasuerus in the twelfth month, which is Adar, in the seventh year of his reign. 17The king loved Esther, and she found favour beyond all the other virgins. He put the queen’s crown on her. 18The king made a banquet for all his friends and great men for seven days, and he highly celebrated the marriage of Esther; and he granted a remission of taxes to those who were under his dominion.

19Meanwhile, Mordecai served in the courtyard. 20Now Esther had not revealed her country, for so Mordecai commanded her, to fear God, and perform his commandments, as when she was with him. Esther didn’t change her manner of life.

21Two chamberlains of the king, the chiefs of the body-guard, were grieved, because Mordecai was promoted; and they sought to kill King Ahasuerus. 22And the matter was discovered by Mordecai, and he made it known to Esther, and she declared to the king the matter of the conspiracy. 23And the king examined the two chamberlains and hanged them. Then the king gave orders to make a note for a memorial in the royal library of the goodwill shown by Mordecai, as a commendation.

Esther 3

1After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes who were with him. 2All the king’s servants who were in the king’s gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai didn’t bow down or pay him homage. 3Then the king’s servants who were in the king’s gate said to Mordecai, “Why do you disobey the king’s commandment?” 4Now it came to pass, when they spoke daily to him, and he didn’t 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. 5When Haman saw that Mordecai didn’t bow down nor pay him homage, Haman was full of wrath. 6But he scorned the thought of laying hands on Mordecai alone, for they had made known to him Mordecai’s people. Therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even Mordecai’s people.

7In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, and chose the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. 8Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed amongst the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom, and their laws are different from other people’s. They don’t keep the king’s laws. Therefore it is not for the king’s profit to allow them to remain. 9If it pleases the king, let it be written that they be destroyed; and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who are in charge of the king’s business, to bring it into the king’s treasuries.”

10The king took his ring from his hand, and gave it to Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews’ enemy. 11The king said to Haman, “The silver is given to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you.”

12Then the king’s scribes were called in on the first month, on the thirteenth day of the month; and all that Haman commanded was written to the king’s local governors, and to the governors who were over every province, and to the princes of every people, to every province according to its writing, and to every people in their language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus, and it was sealed with the king’s ring. 13Letters were sent by couriers into all the king’s provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to plunder their possessions. 14A copy of the letter, that the decree should be given out in every province, was published to all the peoples, that they should be ready against that day. 15 The couriers went out in haste by the king’s commandment, and the decree was given out in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Susa was perplexed.

Greek Esther 3

1After this, King Ahasuerus highly honoured Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Bugaean. He exalted him and set his seat above all his friends. 2All in the palace bowed down to him, for so the king had given orders to do; but Mordecai didn’t bow down to him. 3And they in the king’s palace said to Mordecai, “Mordecai, why do you transgress the commands of the king?” 4They questioned him daily, but he didn’t listen to them; so they reported to Haman that Mordecai resisted the commands of the king; and Mordecai had shown to them that he was a Jew. 5When Haman understood that Mordecai didn’t bow down to him, he was greatly enraged, 6and plotted to utterly destroy all the Jews who were under the rule of Ahasuerus.

7In the twelfth year of the reign of Ahasuerus, Haman made a decision by casting lots by day and month, to kill the race of Mordecai in one day. The lot fell on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar. 8So he spoke to King Ahasuerus, saying, “There is a nation scattered amongst the nations in all your kingdom, and their laws differ from all the other nations. They disobey the king’s laws. It is not expedient for the king to tolerate them. 9If it seem good to the king, let him make a decree to destroy them, and I will remit into the king’s treasury ten thousand talents of silver.”

10So the king took off his ring, and gave it into the hands of Haman to seal the decrees against the Jews. 11The king said to Haman, “Keep the silver, and treat the nation as you will.” 12So the king’s recorders were called in the first month, on the thirteenth day, and they wrote as Haman commanded to the captains and governors in every province, from India even to Ethiopia, to one hundred and twenty-seven provinces; and to the rulers of the nations according to their languages, in the name of King Ahasuerus. 13The message was sent by couriers throughout the kingdom of Ahasuerus, to utterly destroy the race of the Jews on the first day of the twelfth month, which is Adar, and to plunder their goods. [The following is the copy of the letter. “From the great King Ahasuerus to the rulers and the governors under them of one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India even to Ethiopia, who hold authority under him:

“Ruling over many nations and having obtained dominion over the whole world, I was determined (not elated by the confidence of power, but ever conducting myself with great moderation and gentleness) to make the lives of my subjects continually tranquil, desiring both to maintain the kingdom quiet and orderly to its utmost limits, and to restore the peace desired by all men. When I had asked my counsellors how this should be brought to pass, Haman, who excels in soundness of judgement amongst us, and has been manifestly well inclined without wavering and with unshaken fidelity, and had obtained the second post in the kingdom, informed us that a certain ill-disposed people is scattered amongst all the tribes throughout the world, opposed in their law to every other nation, and continually neglecting the commands of the king, so that the united government blamelessly administered by us is not quietly established. Having then conceived that this nation is continually set in opposition to every man, introducing as a change a foreign code of laws, and injuriously plotting to accomplish the worst of evils against our interests, and against the happy establishment of the monarchy, we instruct you in the letter written by Haman, who is set over the public affairs and is our second governor, to destroy them all utterly with their wives and children by the swords of the enemies, without pitying or sparing any, on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month Adar, of the present year; that the people aforetime and now ill-disposed to us having been violently consigned to death in one day, may hereafter secure to us continually a well constituted and quiet state of affairs.”] 14Copies of the letters were published in every province; and an order was given to all the nations to be ready for that day. 15This business was hastened also in Susa. The king and Haman began to drink, but the city was confused.

Esther 4

1Now when Mordecai found out all that was done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the middle of the city, and wailed loudly and bitterly. 2He came even before the king’s gate, for no one is allowed inside the king’s gate clothed with sackcloth. 3In every province, wherever the king’s commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning amongst the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4Esther’s maidens and her eunuchs came and told her this, and the queen was exceedingly grieved. She sent clothing to Mordecai, to replace his sackcloth, but he didn’t receive it. 5Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs, whom he had appointed to attend her, and commanded him to go to Mordecai, to find out what this was, and why it was. 6So Hathach went out to Mordecai, to the city square which was before the king’s gate. 7Mordecai told him of all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king’s treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. 8He also gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given out in Susa to destroy them, to show it to Esther, and to declare it to her, and to urge her to go in to the king to make supplication to him, and to make request before him for her people.

9Hathach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai. 10Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a message to Mordecai: 11“All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that whoever, whether man or woman, comes to the king into the inner court without being called, there is one law for him, that he be put to death, except those to whom the king might hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live. I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days.”

12They told Esther’s words to Mordecai. 13Then Mordecai asked them to return this answer to Esther: “Don’t think to yourself that you will escape in the king’s house any more than all the Jews. 14For if you remain silent now, then relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Who knows if you haven’t come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

15Then Esther asked them to answer Mordecai, 16“Go, gather together all the Jews who are present in Susa, and fast for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I and my maidens will also fast the same way. Then I will go in to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish.” 17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

Greek Esther 4

1But Mordecai, having perceived what was done, tore his garments, put on sackcloth, and sprinkled dust upon himself. Having rushed forth through the open street of the city, he cried with a loud voice, “A nation that has done no wrong is going to be destroyed!” 2He came to the king’s gate, and stood; for it was not lawful for him to enter into the palace wearing sackcloth and ashes. 3And in every province where the letters were published, there was crying, lamentation, and great mourning on the part of the Jews. They wore sackcloth and ashes. 4The queen’s maids and chamberlains went in and told her; and when she had heard what was done, she was deeply troubled. She sent clothes to Mordecai to replace his sackcloth, but he refused. 5So Esther called for her chamberlain Hathach, who waited upon her; and she sent to learn the truth from Mordecai. 7Mordecai showed him what was done, and the promise which Haman had made the king of ten thousand talents to be paid into the treasury, that he might destroy the Jews. 8And he gave him the copy of what was published in Susa concerning their destruction to show to Esther; and told him to charge her to go in and entreat the king, and to beg him for the people. “Remember, he said, the days of your humble condition, how you were nursed by my hand; because Haman, who holds the next place to the king, has spoken against us to cause our death. Call upon the Lord, and speak to the king concerning us, to deliver us from death.”

9So Hathach went in and told her all these words. 10Esther said to Hathach, “Go to Mordecai, and say, 11‘All the nations of the empire know that any man or woman who goes in to the king into the inner court without being called, that person must die, unless the king stretches out his golden sceptre; then he shall live. I haven’t been called to go into the king for thirty days.’”

12So Hathach reported to Mordecai all the words of Esther. 13Then Mordecai said to Hathach, “Go, and say to her, ‘Esther, don’t say to yourself that you alone will escape in the kingdom, more than all the other Jews. 14For if you keep quiet on this occasion, help and protection will come to the Jews from another place; but you and your father’s house will perish. Who knows if you have been made queen for this occasion?’”

15And Esther sent the messenger who came to her to Mordecai, saying, 16“Go and assemble the Jews that are in Susa, and all of you fast for me. Don’t eat or drink for three days, night and day. My maidens and I will also fast. Then I will go in to the king contrary to the law, even if I must die.”

17So Mordecai went and did all that Esther commanded him. 18[He prayed to the Lord, making mention of all the works of the Lord. 19He said, “Lord God, you are king ruling over all, for all things are in your power, and there is no one who can oppose you in your purpose to save Israel; 20for you have made the heaven and the earth and every wonderful thing under heaven. 21You are Lord of all, and there is no one who can resist you, Lord. 22You know all things. You know, Lord, that it is not in insolence, nor arrogance, nor love of glory, that I have done this, to refuse to bow down to the arrogant Haman. 23For I would gladly have kissed the soles of his feet for the safety of Israel. 24But I have done this that I might not set the glory of man above the glory of God. I will not worship anyone except you, my Lord, and I will not do these things in arrogance. 25And now, O Lord God, the King, the God of Abraham, spare your people, for our enemies are planning our destruction, and they have desired to destroy your ancient inheritance. 26Do not overlook your people, whom you have redeemed for yourself out of the land of Egypt. 27Listen to my prayer. Have mercy on your inheritance and turn our mourning into gladness, that we may live and sing praise to your name, O Lord. Don’t utterly destroy the mouth of those who praise you, O Lord.”

28All Israel cried with all their might, for death was before their eyes. 29And queen Esther took refuge in the Lord, being taken as it were in the agony of death. 30Having taken off her glorious apparel, she put on garments of distress and mourning. Instead of grand perfumes she filled her head with ashes and dung. She greatly humbled her body, and she filled every place of her glad adorning with her tangled hair. 31She implored the Lord God of Israel, and said, “O my Lord, you alone are our king. Help me. I am destitute, and have no helper but you, 32for my danger is near at hand. 33I have heard from my birth in the tribe of my kindred that you, Lord, took Israel out of all the nations, and our fathers out of all their kindred for a perpetual inheritance, and have done for them all that you have said. 34And now we have sinned before you, and you have delivered us into the hands of our enemies, 35because we honoured their gods. You are righteous, O Lord. 36But now they have not been content with the bitterness of our slavery, but have laid their hands on the hands of their idols 37to abolish the decree of your mouth, and utterly to destroy your inheritance, and to stop the mouth of those who praise you, and to extinguish the glory of your house and your altar, 38and to open the mouth of the Gentiles to speak the praises of vanities, and that a mortal king should be admired forever. 39O Lord, don’t surrender your sceptre to those who don’t exist, and don’t let them laugh at our fall, but turn their counsel against themselves, and make an example of him who has begun to injure us. 40Remember us, O Lord! Manifest yourself in the time of our affliction. Encourage me, O King of gods, and ruler of all dominion! 41Put harmonious speech into my mouth before the lion, and turn his heart to hate him who fights against us, to the utter destruction of those who agree with him. 42But deliver us by your hand, and help me who am alone and have no one but you, O Lord. 43You know all things, and know that I hate the glory of transgressors, and that I abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of every stranger. 44You know my necessity, for I abhor the symbol of my proud station, which is upon my head in the days of my splendour. I abhor it as a menstruous cloth, and I don’t wear it in the days of my tranquillity. 45Your handmaid has not eaten at Haman’s table, and I have not honoured the banquet of the king, neither have I drunk wine of libations. 46Neither has your handmaid rejoiced since the day of my promotion until now, except in you, O Lord God of Abraham. 47O god, who has power over all, listen to the voice of the desperate, and deliver us from the hand of those who devise mischief. Deliver me from my fear.]

Esther 5

1Now on the third day, Esther put on her royal clothing and stood in the inner court of the king’s house, next to the king’s house. The king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, next to the entrance of the house. 2When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favour in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther came near and touched the top of the sceptre.

3Then the king asked her, “What would you like, queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you even to the half of the kingdom.”

4Esther said, “If it seems good to the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him.”

5Then the king said, “Bring Haman quickly, so that it may be done as Esther has said.” So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6The king said to Esther at the banquet of wine, “What is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.”

7Then Esther answered and said, “My petition and my request is this. 8If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I will prepare for them, and I will do tomorrow as the king has said.”

9Then Haman went out that day joyful and glad of heart, but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king’s gate, that he didn’t stand up nor move for him, he was filled with wrath against Mordecai. 10Nevertheless Haman restrained himself, and went home. There, he sent and called for his friends and Zeresh his wife. 11Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches, the multitude of his children, all the things in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

12Haman also said, “Yes, Esther the queen let no man come in with the king to the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and tomorrow I am also invited by her together with the king. 13Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate.”

14 Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, “Let a gallows be made fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on it. Then go in merrily with the king to the banquet.” This pleased Haman, so he had the gallows made.

Greek Esther 5

1It came to pass on the third day, when she had ceased praying, that she took off her servant’s dress and put on her glorious apparel. Being splendidly dressed and having called upon God the Overseer and Preserver of all things, she took her two maids, and she leaned upon one, as a delicate female, and the other followed bearing her train. She was blooming in the perfection of her beauty. Her face was cheerful and looked lovely, but her heart was filled with fear. Having passed through all the doors, she stood before the king. He was sitting on his royal throne. He had put on all his glorious apparel, covered all over with gold and precious stones, and was very terrifying. And having raised his face resplendent with glory, he looked with intense anger. The queen fell, and changed her colour as she fainted. She bowed herself upon the head of the maid who went before her. But God changed the spirit of the king to gentleness, and in intense feeling, he sprang from off his throne, and took her into his arms, until she recovered. He comforted her with peaceful words, and said to her, “What is the matter, Esther? I am your relative. Cheer up! You shall not die, for our command is openly declared to you: ‘Draw near.’”

2And having raised the golden sceptre, he laid it upon her neck, and embraced her. He said, “Speak to me.”

So she said to him, “I saw you, my lord, as an angel of God, and my heart was troubled for fear of your glory; for you, my lord, are to be wondered at, and your face is full of grace.” While she was speaking, she fainted and fell.

Then the king was troubled, and all his servants comforted her. 3The king said, “What do you desire, Esther? What is your request? Ask even to the half of my kingdom, and it shall be yours.”

4Esther said, “Today is a special day. So if it seems good to the king, let both him and Haman come to the feast which I will prepare this day.”

5The king said, “Hurry and bring Haman here, that we may do as Esther said.” So they both came to the feast about which Esther had spoken. 6At the banquet, the king said to Esther, “What is your request, queen Esther? You shall have all that you require.”

7She said, “My request and my petition is: 8if I have found favour in the king’s sight, let the king and Haman come again tomorrow to the feast which I shall prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as I have done today.”

9So Haman went out from the king very glad and merry; but when Haman saw Mordecai the Jew in the court, he was greatly enraged. 10Having gone into his own house, he called his friends, and his wife Zeresh. 11He showed them his wealth and the glory with which the king had invested him, and how he had promoted him to be chief ruler in the kingdom. 12Haman said, “The queen has called no one to the feast with the king but me, and I am invited tomorrow. 13But these things don’t please me while I see Mordecai the Jew in the court.

14Then Zeresh his wife and his friends said to him, “Let a fifty cubit tall gallows be made for you. In the morning you speak to the king, and let Mordecai be hanged on the gallows; but you go in to the feast with the king, and be merry.”

The saying pleased Haman, and the gallows was prepared.

Esther 6

1On that night, the king couldn’t sleep. He commanded the book of records of the chronicles to be brought, and they were read to the king. 2It was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s eunuchs, who were doorkeepers, who had tried to lay hands on the King Ahasuerus. 3The king said, “What honour and dignity has been given to Mordecai for this?”

Then the king’s servants who attended him said, “Nothing has been done for him.”

4The king said, “Who is in the court?” Now Haman had come into the outer court of the king’s house, to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

5The king’s servants said to him, “Behold, Haman stands in the court.”

The king said, “Let him come in.” 6So Haman came in. The king said to him, “What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honour?”

Now Haman said in his heart, “Who would the king delight to honour more than myself?” 7Haman said to the king, “For the man whom the king delights to honour, 8let royal clothing be brought which the king uses to wear, and the horse that the king rides on, and on the head of which a royal crown is set. 9Let the clothing and the horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that they may array the man whom the king delights to honour with them, and have him ride on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, ‘Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honour!’”

10Then the king said to Haman, “Hurry and take the clothing and the horse, as you have said, and do this for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king’s gate. Let nothing fail of all that you have spoken.”

11Then Haman took the clothing and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and had him ride through the city square, and proclaimed before him, “Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honour!”

12Mordecai came back to the king’s gate, but Haman hurried to his house, mourning and having his head covered. 13Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, “If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him, but you will surely fall before him.” 14 While they were yet talking with him, the king’s eunuchs came, and hurried to bring Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Greek Esther 6

1The Lord removed sleep from the king that night; so he told his servant to bring in the books, the registers of daily events, to read to him. 2And he found the records written concerning Mordecai, how he had told the king about the king’s two chamberlains, when they were keeping guard, and sought to lay hands on Ahasuerus. 3The king said, “What honour or favour have we done for Mordecai?”

The king’s servants said, “You haven’t done anything for him.”

4And while the king was enquiring about the kindness of Mordecai, behold, Haman was in the court. The king said, “Who is in the court? Now Haman had come in to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows which he had prepared. 5The king’s servants said, “Behold, Haman stands in the court.”

And the king said, “Call him!”

6The king said to Haman, “What should I do for the man whom I wish to honour?”

Haman said within himself, “Whom would the king honour but myself?” 7He said to the king, “As for the man whom the king wishes to honour, 8let the king’s servants bring the robe of fine linen which the king puts on, and the horse on which the king rides, 9and let him give it to one of the king’s noble friends, and let him dress the man whom the king loves. Let him mount him on the horse, and proclaim through the streets of the city, saying, “This is what will be done for every man whom the king honours!”

10Then the king said to Haman, “You have spoken well. Do so for Mordecai the Jew, who waits in the palace, and let not a word of what you have spoken be neglected!”

11So Haman took the robe and the horse, dressed Mordecai, mounted him on the horse, and went through the streets of the city, proclaiming, “This is what will be done for every man whom the king wishes to honour.” 12Then Mordecai returned to the palace; but Haman went home mourning, with his head covered.

13Haman related the events that had happened to him to Zeresh his wife and to his friends. His friends and his wife said to him, “If Mordecai is of the race of the Jews, and you have begun to be humbled before him, you will assuredly fall; and you will not be able to withstand him, for the living God is with him.” 14While they were still speaking, the chamberlains arrived to rush Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

Esther 7

1So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. 2The king said again to Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, “What is your petition, queen Esther? It shall be granted you. What is your request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.”

3Then Esther the queen answered, “If I have found favour in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. 4For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for male and female slaves, I would have held my peace, although the adversary could not have compensated for the king’s loss.”

5Then King Ahasuerus said to Esther the queen, “Who is he, and where is he who dared presume in his heart to do so?”

6Esther said, “An adversary and an enemy, even this wicked Haman!”

Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. 7The king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden. Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen, for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. 8Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman had fallen on the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, “Will he even assault the queen in front of me in the house?” As the word went out of the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face.

9Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs who were with the king, said, “Behold, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman has made for Mordecai, who spoke good for the king, is standing at Haman’s house.”

The king said, “Hang him on it!”

10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king’s wrath was pacified.

Greek Esther 7

1So the king and Haman went in to drink with the queen. 2The king said to Esther at the banquet on the second day, “What is it, queen Esther? What is your request? What is your petition? It shall be done for you, up to half of my kingdom.”

3She answered and said, “If I have found favour in the sight of the king, let my life be granted as my petition, and my people as my request. 4For both I and my people are sold for destruction, pillage, and genocide. If both we and our children were sold for male and female slaves, I would not have bothered you, for this isn’t worthy of the king’s palace.”

5The king said, “Who has dared to do this thing?”

6Esther said, “The enemy is Haman, this wicked man!”

Then Haman was terrified in the presence of the king and the queen. 7The king rose up from the banquet to go into the garden. Haman began to beg the queen for mercy, for he saw that he was in serious trouble. 8The king returned from the garden; and Haman had fallen upon the couch, begging the queen for mercy. The king said, “Will you even assault my wife in my house?”

And when Haman heard it, he changed countenance. 9And Bugathan, one of the chamberlains, said to the king, “Behold, Haman has also prepared a gallows for Mordecai, who spoke concerning the king, and a fifty cubit high gallows has been set up on Haman’s property.”

The king said, “Let him be hanged on it!” 10So Haman was hanged on the gallows that had been prepared for Mordecai. Then the king’s wrath was abated.

Esther 8

1On that day, King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the Jews’ enemy, to Esther the queen. Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was to her. 2The king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3Esther spoke yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet and begged him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his plan that he had planned against the Jews. 4Then the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre. So Esther arose, and stood before the king. 5She said, “If it pleases the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seems right to the king, and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king’s provinces. 6For how can I endure to see the evil that would come to my people? How can I endure to see the destruction of my relatives?”

7Then King Ahasuerus said to Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, “See, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he laid his hand on the Jews. 8Write also to the Jews as it pleases you, in the king’s name, and seal it with the king’s ring; for the writing which is written in the king’s name, and sealed with the king’s ring, may not be reversed by any man.”

9Then the king’s scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month Sivan, on the twenty-third day of the month; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded to the Jews, and to the local governors, and the governors and princes of the provinces which are from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, to every province according to its writing, and to every people in their language, and to the Jews in their writing, and in their language. 10He wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king’s ring, and sent letters by courier on horseback, riding on royal horses that were bred from swift steeds. 11In those letters, the king granted the Jews who were in every city to gather themselves together and to defend their lives—to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all the power of the people and province that would assault them, their little ones and women, and to plunder their possessions, 12on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. 13A copy of the letter, that the decree should be given out in every province, was published to all the peoples, that the Jews should be ready for that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. 14So the couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king’s commandment. The decree was given out in the citadel of Susa.

15Mordecai went out of the presence of the king in royal clothing of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a robe of fine linen and purple; and the city of Susa shouted and was glad. 16The Jews had light, gladness, joy, and honour. 17 In every province and in every city, wherever the king’s commandment and his decree came, the Jews had gladness, joy, a feast and a holiday. Many from amongst the peoples of the land became Jews, for the fear of the Jews had fallen on them.

Greek Esther 8

1On that day, King Ahasuerus gave to Esther all that belonged to Haman the slanderer. The king called Mordecai, for Esther had told that he was related to her. 2The king took the ring which he had taken away from Haman and gave it to Mordecai. Esther appointed Mordecai over all that had been Haman’s. 3She spoke yet again to the king, and fell at his feet, and implored him to undo Haman’s mischief and all that he had done against the Jews. 4Then the king extended the golden sceptre to Esther; and Esther arose to stand near the king. 5Esther said, “If it seems good to you, and I have found favour in your sight, let an order be sent that the letters sent by Haman may be reversed—letters that were written for the destruction of the Jews who are in your kingdom. 6For how could I see the affliction of my people, and how could I survive the destruction of my kindred?”

7Then the king said to Esther, “If I have given and freely granted you all that was Haman’s, and hanged him on a gallows because he laid his hands upon the Jews, what more do you seek? 8Write in my name whatever seems good to you, and seal it with my ring; for whatever is written at the command of the king, and sealed with my ring, cannot be countermanded. 9So the scribes were called in the first month, which is Nisan, on the twenty-third day of the same year; and orders were written to the Jews, whatever the king had commanded to the local governors and chiefs of the local governors, from India even to Ethiopia—one hundred and twenty-seven local governors, according to the several provinces, in their own languages. 10They were written by order of the king, sealed with his ring, and the letters were sent by the couriers. 11In them, he charged them to use their own laws in every city, to help each other, and to treat their adversaries and those who attacked them as they pleased, 12on one day in all the kingdom of Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is Adar. 13Let the copies be posted in conspicuous places throughout the kingdom. Let all the Jews be ready against this day, to fight against their enemies. The following is a copy of the letter containing orders:

[The great King Ahasuerus sends greetings to the rulers of provinces in one hundred and twenty-seven local governance regions, from India to Ethiopia, even to those who are faithful to our interests. Many who have been frequently honoured by the most abundant kindness of their benefactors have conceived ambitious designs, and not only endeavour to hurt our subjects, but moreover, not being able to bear prosperity, they also endeavour to plot against their own benefactors. They not only would utterly abolish gratitude from amongst men, but also, elated by the boastings of men who are strangers to all that is good, they supposed that they would escape the sin-hating vengeance of the ever-seeing God. And oftentimes evil exhortation has made partakers of the guilt of shedding innocent blood, and has involved in irremediable calamities many of those who had been appointed to offices of authority, who had been entrusted with the management of their friends’ affairs; while men, by the false sophistry of an evil disposition, have deceived the simple goodwill of the ruling powers. And it is possible to see this, not so much from more ancient traditional accounts, as it is immediately in your power to see it by examining what things have been wickedly perpetrated by the baseness of men unworthily holding power. It is right to take heed with regard to the future, that we may maintain the government in undisturbed peace for all men, adopting needful changes, and ever judging those cases which come under our notice with truly equitable decisions. For whereas Haman, a Macedonian, the son of Hammedatha, in reality an alien from the blood of the Persians, and differing widely from our mild course of government, having been hospitably entertained by us, obtained so large a share of our universal kindness as to be called our father, and to continue the person next to the royal throne, reverenced of all; he however, overcome by pride, endeavored to deprive us of our dominion, and our life; having by various and subtle artifices demanded for destruction both Mordecai our deliverer and perpetual benefactor, and Esther the blameless consort of our kingdom, along with their whole nation. For by these methods he thought, having surprised us in a defenceless state, to transfer the dominion of the Persians to the Macedonians. But we find that the Jews, who have been consigned to destruction by the most abominable of men, are not malefactors, but living according to the most just laws, and being the sons of the living God, the most high and mighty, who maintains the kingdom, to us as well as to our forefathers, in the most excellent order. You will therefore do well in refusing to obey the letter sent by Haman the son of Hammedatha, because he who has done these things has been hanged with his whole family at the gates of Susa, Almighty God having swiftly returned to him a worthy punishment. We enjoin you then, having openly published a copy of this letter in every place, to give the Jews permission to use their own lawful customs and to strengthen them, that on the thirteenth of the twelfth month Adar, on the self-same day, they may defend themselves against those who attack them in a time of affliction. For in the place of the destruction of the chosen race, Almighty God has granted them this time of gladness. Therefore you also, amongst your notable feasts, must keep a distinct day with all festivity, that both now and hereafter it may be a day of deliverance to us and who are well disposed towards the Persians, but to those that plotted against us a memorial of destruction. And every city and province collectively, which shall not do accordingly, shall be consumed with vengeance by spear and fire. It shall be made not only inaccessible to men, but most hateful to wild beasts and birds forever.] Let the copies be posted in conspicuous places throughout the kingdom and let all the Jews be ready against this day, to fight against their enemies. 14So the horsemen went forth with haste to perform the king’s commands. The ordinance was also published in Susa.

15Mordecai went out robed in royal apparel, wearing a golden crown and a diadem of fine purple linen. The people in Susa saw it and rejoiced. 16The Jews had light and gladness 17in every city and province where the ordinance was published. Wherever the proclamation took place, the Jews had joy and gladness, feasting and mirth. Many of the Gentiles were circumcised and became Jews for fear of the Jews.

Esther 9

1Now in the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the month, when the king’s commandment and his decree came near to be put in execution, on the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to conquer them, (but it turned out that the opposite happened, that the Jews conquered those who hated them), 2the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the King Ahasuerus, to lay hands on those who wanted to harm them. No one could withstand them, because the fear of them had fallen on all the people. 3All the princes of the provinces, the local governors, the governors, and those who did the king’s business helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai had fallen on them. 4For Mordecai was great in the king’s house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces, for the man Mordecai grew greater and greater. 5The Jews struck all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and with slaughter and destruction, and did what they wanted to those who hated them. 6In the citadel of Susa, the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. 7They killed Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, 8Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, 9Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha, 10the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Jews’ enemy, but they didn’t lay their hand on the plunder.

11On that day, the number of those who were slain in the citadel of Susa was brought before the king. 12The king said to Esther the queen, “The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in the citadel of Susa, including 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. What is your further request? It shall be done.”

13Then Esther said, “If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who are in Susa to do tomorrow also according to today’s decree, and let Haman’s ten sons be hanged on the gallows.”

14The king commanded this to be done. A decree was given out in Susa; and they hanged Haman’s ten sons. 15The Jews who were in Susa gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and killed three hundred men in Susa; but they didn’t lay their hand on the plunder.

16The other Jews who were in the king’s provinces gathered themselves together, defended their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of those who hated them; but they didn’t lay their hand on the plunder. 17This was done on the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and on the fourteenth day of that month they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

18But the Jews who were in Susa assembled together on the thirteenth and on the fourteenth days of the month; and on the fifteenth day of that month, they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. 19Therefore the Jews of the villages, who live in the unwalled towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, a holiday, and a day of sending presents of food to one another.

20Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of the King Ahasuerus, both near and far, 21to enjoin them that they should keep the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar yearly, 22as the days in which the Jews had rest from their enemies, and the month which was turned to them from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending presents of food to one another, and gifts to the needy. 23The Jews accepted the custom that they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them, 24because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast “Pur”, that is the lot, to consume them and to destroy them; 25but when this became known to the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked plan, which he had planned against the Jews, should return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

26Therefore they called these days “Purim”, from the word “Pur.” Therefore because of all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and that which had come to them, 27the Jews established and imposed on themselves, on their descendants, and on all those who joined themselves to them, so that it should not fail that they would keep these two days according to what was written and according to its appointed time every year; 28and that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from amongst the Jews, nor their memory perish from their offspring.

29Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew wrote with all authority to confirm this second letter of Purim. 30He sent letters to all the Jews in the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus with words of peace and truth, 31to confirm these days of Purim in their appointed times, as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had decreed, and as they had imposed upon themselves and their descendants in the matter of the fastings and their mourning. 32 The commandment of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

Greek Esther 9

1Now in the twelfth month, on the thirteenth day of the month, which is Adar, the letters written by the king arrived. 2In that day, the adversaries of the Jews perished; for no one resisted, through fear of them. 3For the chiefs of the local governors, and the princes and the royal scribes, honoured the Jews; for the fear of Mordecai was upon them. 4For the order of the king was in force, that he should be celebrated in all the kingdom. 6In the city Susa the Jews killed five hundred men, 7including Pharsannes, Delphon, Phasga, 8Pharadatha, Barea, Sarbaca, 9Marmasima, Ruphaeus, Arsaeus, and Zabuthaeus, 10the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha the Bugaean, the enemy of the Jews; and they plundered their property on the same day. 11The number of those who perished in Susa was reported to the king.

12Then the king said to Esther, “The Jews have slain five hundred men in the city Susa. What do you think they have done in the rest of the country? What more do you ask, that it may be done for you?”

13Esther said to the king, “Let it be granted to the Jews to do the same to them tomorrow. Also, hang the bodies of the ten sons of Haman.”

14He permitted it to be done; and he gave up to the Jews of the city the bodies of the sons of Haman to hang. 15The Jews assembled in Susa on the fourteenth day of Adar and killed three hundred men, but plundered no property.

16The rest of the Jews who were in the kingdom assembled, and helped one another, and obtained rest from their enemies; for they destroyed fifteen thousand of them on the thirteenth day of Adar, but took no spoil. 17They rested on the fourteenth of the same month, and kept it as a day of rest with joy and gladness.

18The Jews in the city of Susa assembled also on the fourteenth day and rested; and they also observed the fifteenth with joy and gladness. 19On this account then, the Jews dispersed in every foreign land keep the fourteenth of Adar as a holy day with joy, each sending gifts of food to his neighbour.

20Mordecai wrote these things in a book and sent them to the Jews, as many as were in the kingdom of Ahasuerus, both those who were near and those who were far away, 21to establish these as joyful days and to keep the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar; 22for on these days the Jews obtained rest from their enemies; and in that month, which was Adar, in which a change was made for them from mourning to joy, and from sorrow to a holiday, to spend the whole of it in good days of feasting and gladness, sending portions to their friends and to the poor. 23And the Jews consented to this as Mordecai wrote to them, 24showing how Haman the son of Hammedatha the Macedonian fought against them, how he made a decree and cast lots to destroy them utterly; 25also how he went in to the king, telling him to hang Mordecai; but all the calamities he tried to bring upon the Jews came upon himself, and he was hanged, along with his children. 26Therefore these days were called Purim, because of the lots (for in their language they are called Purim) because of the words of this letter, and because of all they suffered on this account, and all that happened to them. 27Mordecai established it, and the Jews took upon themselves, upon their offspring, and upon those who were joined to them to observe it, neither would they on any account behave differently; but these days were to be a memorial kept in every generation, city, family, and province. 28These days of Purim shall be kept forever, and their memorial shall not fail in any generation.

29Queen Esther the daughter of Aminadab and Mordecai the Jew wrote all that they had done, and gave the confirmation of the letter about Purim. 31Mordecai and Esther the queen established this decision on their own, pledging their own well-being to their plan. 32And Esther established it by a command forever, and it was written for a memorial.

Esther 10

**1**King Ahasuerus laid a tribute on the land and on the islands of the sea. **2**Aren’t all the acts of his power and of his might, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? **3** For Mordecai the Jew was next to King Ahasuerus, and great amongst the Jews and accepted by the multitude of his brothers, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his descendants.

Greek Esther 10

1The king levied a tax upon his kingdom both by land and sea. 2As for his strength and valour, and the wealth and glory of his kingdom, behold, they are written in the book of the Persians and Medes for a memorial.

3Mordecai was viceroy to King Ahasuerus, and was a great man in the kingdom, honoured by the Jews, and lived his life loved by all his nation. 4[Mordecai said, “These things have come from God. 5For I remember the dream which I had concerning these matters; for not one detail of them has failed. 6There was the little spring which became a river, and there was light, and the sun and much water. The river is Esther, whom the king married and made queen. 7The two serpents are Haman and me. 8The nations are those which combined to destroy the name of the Jews. 9But as for my nation, this is Israel, even those who cried to God and were delivered; for the Lord delivered his people. The Lord rescued us out of all these calamities; and God worked such signs and great wonders as have not been done amongst the nations. 10Therefore he ordained two lots. One for the people of God, and one for all the other nations. 11And these two lots came for an appointed season, and for a day of judgement, before God, and for all the nations. 12God remembered his people and vindicated his inheritance. 13They shall observe these days in the month Adar, on the fourteenth and on the fifteenth day of the month, with an assembly, joy, and gladness before God, throughout the generations forever amongst his people Israel. 14In the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemeus and Cleopatra, Dositheus, who said he was a priest and Levite, and Ptolemeus his son brought this letter of Purim, which they said was authentic, and that Lysimachus the son of Ptolemeus, who was in Jerusalem, had interpreted.]