

This book contains the account of Esther, the queen of Persia, protecting the Jewish people from Haman, who wanted to destroy them. We call this book Esther

The king of Persia deposed his queen

¹ King Xerxes ruled a very big empire which had 127 provinces. It extended from India *in the east* to Ethiopia *in the west*. ² He ruled the empire while he lived in the capital city, Susa. ³ During the third year that he ruled his empire, he invited all his administrators and *other* officials to a big banquet/feast. He invited all the commanders of the armies of Persia and Media to come to the banquet. He also invited the governors and other leaders of the provinces. ⁴ *The celebration* lasted for six months. During that time the king showed his guests all his wealth and other things that showed how great his kingdom was (OR, how great a king he was).

⁵ At the end of those six months, the king invited people to another banquet. He invited to the banquet all the men who worked in the palace, including those who had important jobs and those who had unimportant jobs. *This celebration* lasted for seven days. It was in the courtyard of the palace in Susa. ⁶ *In the courtyard*

were beautiful blue and white curtains that were fastened by white and purple cords/ribbons to rings that were on pillars made from *expensive white stone called marble*. *The guests sat on gold and silver couches*. The couches were on a pavement/floor which had on top of it designs made from various kinds of expensive stones. ⁷ *The guests drank wine from gold cups*. Each cup had a different design on it. ⁸ There was a lot of wine, because the king wanted the guests to drink as much as they wanted. But the king told the servants that they should not force anyone to drink more than he wanted.

⁹ *At the same time, the king's wife, Queen Vashti, invited the wives of the men who worked in the palace to a banquet in another room in the palace.*

¹⁰ On the last/seventh day of those banquets, when King Xerxes was partially drunk from drinking wine, he *summoned* seven of his personal servants. They were Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas. ¹¹ He told them to bring Queen Vashti to him, wearing her crown. He wanted his guests to see that she was very beautiful. ¹² But when those servants told Vashti what the king wanted, she refused to go to the king *because she did not want to display her beauty in front of a group of half-drunk men*.

So that caused the king to become very angry. ¹³⁻¹⁴ Immediately he had a meeting with the seven men who were the most important officials in Persia and Media. They were the

men whom he often asked ◀for their advice/what he should do▶. And they were men who knew all the customs and laws of *Persia*. Their names were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan. ¹⁵ The king said to them, “Queen Vashti has refused to obey me when I sent my servants *to tell her to come here*. What do our laws say that we should do to someone who *acts/behaves like that?*”

¹⁶ While the other officials were present, Memucan told the king, “*Your majesty*, Queen Vashti has ◀insulted/done wrong against▶ you, but she has also insulted all your officials and everyone else ◀in your empire/that you rule over▶. ¹⁷ All the women *throughout the empire* will hear what she has done, and they will say, ‘The king commanded Queen Vashti to come to him, and she refused.’ *So they will not obey their husbands. Instead*, they will begin to not respect their husbands. ¹⁸ Before this day ends, the wives of all us officials in *Persia and Media* will hear what the queen did, and they also will refuse to obey their husbands. They will not respect us, and they will cause us to become very angry. ¹⁹ So if it pleases you, O king, you should write a law. Like all the other laws of *Persia and Media*, it will be a law that ◀no one can change/cannot be changed.▶ Write a law that states that Queen Vashti will never be allowed to see you again *and will not continue to be the queen*. Then you can choose another woman to be queen, a woman who deserves to be queen more than Vashti does. ²⁰ Then, when everyone in your

empire hears what you have commanded, all the women, including those who are important and those who are not important, will respect and obey their husbands.”

²¹ The king and the other officials liked what Memucan suggested, so he *did that*. *He wrote a law* proclaiming that. ²² Then he sent letters to all the provinces, stating that all men should have complete authority over their wives and their children. He wrote the letters in every language and type of writing/alphabet that was used in each province.

2

Esther became the new queen

¹ After a while, King Xerxes quit being so angry. He thought about Vashti, and he thought about the law he had made because of what she *had done, and he wanted another wife*. ² So his personal servants said to him, “*Your majesty*, you should send some men to search throughout the empire for some beautiful young women/virgins for you. ³ *After they find some*, you can appoint some officials in each province to bring them to the place where you keep ◀your wives/the women you sleep with▶ here in Susa. Then Hegai, the man who is in charge of these women, can arrange for ointments to be put *on their bodies* to make them *more* beautiful. ⁴ Then the woman who pleases you most can become queen instead of Vashti.” The king liked what they suggested, so he did it.

⁵ At that time there was a Jew *living* in Susa, the capital, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair. Jair was a descendant of Shimei. Shimei was a descendant of *King Saul's father* Kish. *They were all* from the tribe descended from Benjamin. ⁶ *Many years before that*, King Nebuchadnezzar had taken ◀Mordecai/Mordecai's family▶ *and brought them from Jerusalem* to Babylon, at the same time he brought King Jehoiachin of Judah and many other people to Babylon. ⁷ Mordecai had a cousin whose *Hebrew* name was Hadassah. She had a beautiful face and beautiful body/figure. Her *Persian* name was Esther. After her father and mother died, Mordecai took care of Esther as though she were his own daughter. ⁸ After the king commanded *that they search for some beautiful women*, they brought Esther and many other young women to the king's palace *in Susa*, and ◀the king put Hegai/Hegai was put▶ in charge of them. ⁹ Hegai was very pleased with Esther, and he treated her well. He immediately arranged for her to be given ointments to make her *even more* beautiful, and *he ordered that special food would be given to her*. *He arranged that seven maids from the king's palace would take care of her*, and arranged that she/they would stay in the best rooms.

¹⁰ Esther did not tell anyone that she was a Jew, because Mordecai had told her not to tell anyone. ¹¹ Every day Mordecai walked near the courtyard of the place where those women stayed. He asked *people who entered the courtyard* to find

out *and tell him* what was happening to Esther.

¹² Before these women were taken to the king, they put ointments on *the bodies of* these women for one year to make them more beautiful. For six months they *rubbed olive* oil mixed with myrrh *on their bodies each day*. For *the next* six months they rubbed ointments and perfumes on their bodies. ¹³ Then, when one of these women *was summoned to go to the king*, she was allowed to wear whatever clothes and jewelry she chose. ¹⁴ In the evening, they would take her *to the king's own room*. The next morning, they would take her to another place where the women *who had slept with the king* stayed. There another official whose name was Shaashgaz was in charge *of those women*. *Those women would live there for the rest of their lives, and* one of those women would go back to the king again only if the king very much wanted her to come again, and only if he told Shaashgaz the name of the woman.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Everyone who saw Esther liked her. After King Xerxes had been ruling for seven years, it was Esther's turn to go to him. When they took her to the king, it was during the middle part of the winter. She wore only the things that Hegai suggested. ¹⁷ The king liked Esther more than he liked any of the other women *that they brought to him*. He liked her so much that he put on her head the queen's crown, and he declared that Esther would be the queen instead of Vashti. ¹⁸ To celebrate her *becoming the queen*, he had a big banquet/feast prepared for all his

administrators and *other* officials. He generously gave *expensive* gifts to everyone, and he declared that in all the provinces there would be a holiday, *a time when people did not have to pay taxes*.

¹⁹ Later all those women who had spent a night with the king were gathered together again. By that time Mordecai had become an official at the palace. ²⁰ But Esther still did not tell anyone that she was a Jew. She continued to do what Mordecai had told her to do. ²¹ One day when Mordecai was doing his work in the palace, two of the king's officials were there. Their names were Bigthana and Teresh. They were the guards who stood outside the king's own rooms. They became angry *with the king*, and they were planning how they could assassinate/kill him. ²² But Mordecai heard about what they were planning, and he told that to Queen Esther. Then she told the king what Mordecai had found out. ²³ The king investigated and found out that Mordecai's report was true. So the king ordered that those two men be hanged. When that was done, ◀an official wrote a report/a report was written▶ about it in a book called 'The book that records what happened while Xerxes was king'.

3

Haman planned to kill to the Jews

¹ Some time later, King Xerxes ◀promoted/gave his most important job/work to▶ Haman, the son of Hammedatha, who was a descendant of *King* Agag. Haman became more important than all his other officials. *Only the king was*

more important. ² Then the king commanded that all the other officials had to bow down in front of Haman to honor him *when he walked by.* But Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman.

³ The *other* officials *saw that, and they* asked Mordecai, “Why do you disobey what the king commanded?” ⁴ Mordecai told them that he was a Jew, *and that Jews would bow down only to God.* Day after day the other officials spoke to Mordecai about that, but he still refused to obey. So they told Haman about it, to see if Haman would tolerate it.

⁵ When Haman saw that Mordecai would not bow down to him, he became extremely angry. ⁶ *After he found out that Mordecai was a Jew,* he decided that it would not be enough to get rid of only Mordecai. He decided to kill all the Jews in all the area that Xerxes ruled.

⁷ So, during the twelfth year that Xerxes was ruling, during the month of April, *Haman told his advisors to* ◀cast lots/throw small marked stones▶ to determine the best month and the best day to kill the Jews. Haman’s advisors did that, and the day that was selected was March 7th *during the following/next year.*

⁸ Then Haman *went to* the king *and* said to *him,* “*Your majesty,* there is a certain group of people who live in many areas *of your empire* whose customs are different from ours. They even refuse to obey your laws. So it would be good for you to get rid of them. ⁹ If it pleases you, command that they should all be killed. *If you do that,* I will give ◀375 tons/750,000 pounds▶ of

silver to your administrators so that you can use it for your government.”

¹⁰ The king liked *what Haman said, so, and to confirm what he decided*, he gave the ring that had his official seal on it to Haman, who now hated the Jews. ¹¹ The king told Haman, “Keep your money, but do what you want to with those people *whom you talked about!*”

¹²⁻¹³ On April 17th Haman summoned the king’s secretaries, and he dictated a letter to them that they *translated and* wrote to all the governors and administrators and other officials in all the provinces. They wrote copies of the letter in every language and every kind of writing/alphabet that was used in the empire. They wrote that all the Jews, *including* young people and old people, women and children, had to be killed on one day. That day was March 7th of the following year. They also wrote that *those who killed the Jews* could take everything that belonged to the Jews. *They signed* the king’s name *at the end of* the letters. Then they sealed the letters *with wax, and stamped the wax by* using the king’s ring. Then they sent the letters swiftly to every province in the empire,

¹⁴ The king *also commanded* that copies of these letters should be *nailed up* where *all the people* could see them, in every province, so that the people would be ready to do on the day the king had set *what was written in the letter*. ¹⁵ Then, according to what the king commanded, men *riding horses* took those letters quickly to every province *in the empire*. And one of the

letters was read *aloud to the people* in the capital city, Susa. Then the king and Haman sat down and drank *wine*, but the people in Susa were very perplexed *about why this was going to happen*.

4

Mordecai requested help from Esther

¹ When Mordecai found out about those *letters*, *he was so anguished that* he tore his clothes and put on *rough* sackcloth and *threw* ashes over himself. Then he went into the city, crying very loudly. ² He stood outside the gate of the palace, because no one who was wearing sackcloth was allowed to enter the palace. ³ In every province *of the empire*, when the letter from the king was read to the Jewish people, they cried and mourned. They *fasted/abstained from eating food*, and wailed loudly. Many of them also put on sackcloth and threw ashes on themselves and lay *on the ground*. ⁴ When Esther's maids and other officials came to her and told her what Mordecai had done, she was very distressed. So she sent to Mordecai *some good* clothes to wear instead of the sackcloth, but he refused to take them. ⁵ Then Esther summoned Hathach, one of the king's officials whom he had appointed to help take care of Esther. She told him to go *out and talk* to Mordecai to find out what was distressing him and why *he was wearing sackcloth to show* that he was grieving. ⁶ Hathach went to Mordecai, who was in the plaza in front of the palace gate. ⁷ Mordecai told him everything that had happened. He told him how

much money Haman had promised to give to the government if the king commanded that all the Jews be killed. ⁸ Mordecai also gave to Hathach a copy of the decree that had been read in Susa, *in which it was stated* that all the Jews must be killed. He told Hathach to show the copy to Esther. He told Hathach to explain to Esther what ◀it meant/would happen▶. Then he told him to urge her to go to the king and request the king to act mercifully to her people. ⁹ So Hathach returned to Esther and told her what Mordecai said. ¹⁰ Then Esther told Hathach to *return to Mordecai and tell this to him*: ¹¹ “There is a law *about people going to talk to the king*. All the king’s officials and all the people in the empire know this law. *In that law it states that anyone who goes to the king in his inner court without having been summoned by the king must be executed. Only those to whom the king has extended his scepter/staff will not be executed. And a month has passed since the king has summoned me, so what will happen to me if I try to see him and he doesn’t want to see me?*” ¹² So Hathach *went back to Mordecai and told him* what Esther had said. ¹³ Mordecai replied, “*Go back and tell this to Esther: ‘Do not think that just because you live there in the palace, you will escape when all the other Jews are killed. ‘14 If you say nothing now, someone from some other place will rescue many of us Jews, but you and your relatives will be killed. Furthermore, ◀perhaps God/who knows if God▶ has put you here as queen ◀for a situation like*

this/to prevent this from happening to us!'" [RHQ] ¹⁵ Then *after Hathach told this to Esther, she* told him to return to Mordecai and say this to him: ¹⁶ "Gather together all the Jews here in Susa, and tell them to ◀fast/abstain from food▶ for my sake. Tell them to not eat or drink anything for three days and nights. My maids and I will also fast. Then, I will go to talk to the king. Even if ◀I am executed/they execute me▶ for disobeying the law *by seeing him when he does not hold out the scepter/staff toward me, I am willing for that to happen*". ¹⁷ So *after Hathach told this to Mordecai*, Mordecai went and did what Esther told him to do.

5

Esther invited Haman and the king to a banquet

¹ Three days later, Esther *prepared a big banquet/feast. Then she* put on the robes that showed that she was queen, and she went to the inner courtyard of the palace, across from the room where the king was. He was sitting on the throne, facing the entrance *of the room*. ² When the king saw Esther standing there in the courtyard, he extended the gold scepter/staff toward her *to signal that he would be glad to talk to her*. So Esther came close and touched the tip of the scepter/staff. ³ Then the king asked her, "Esther, what do you want? Tell me, and I will give you what you want, even if you ask me to give you half of my kingdom!" ⁴ Esther replied, "*Your majesty, if it pleases you, you and Haman*

come to the banquet that I have prepared for you!" ⁵ The king said *to his servants*, "Go and tell Haman to come quickly to a banquet that Esther has prepared for the two of us!" So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared for them. ⁶ While they were drinking wine, the king said to Esther, "Tell me what you *really* want. I will give it to you, even if *you ask for half of my kingdom.*" ⁷⁻⁸ Esther replied, "*I will tell you what I want most of all. Your majesty, if you are pleased with me, and if you are willing to give me what I am requesting, please come again tomorrow to another banquet that I will prepare for the two of you. Then I will tell you what I really want.*"

Haman planned to kill Mordecai

⁹ Haman was feeling very happy as he left the banquet. But then he saw Mordecai sitting at the gate of the palace. Mordecai did not stand up and tremble fearfully in front of Haman, so Haman became extremely angry. ¹⁰ However, he did not show that he was angry; he *just* went home. Then he gathered together his wife Zeresh and his friends, ¹¹ and he boasted to them about being very rich, and about having many children. He also boasted that the king had greatly honored him, and that the king had ◀promoted him/given him the second-most important job in the empire▶, so that *all* the other officials had to respect him. ¹² Then Haman added, "And that is not all! Queen Esther invited just two of us, the king and me, to a

banquet she prepared for us today. And she is inviting *only* the two of us to another banquet that she will prepare tomorrow!" ¹³ Then Haman said, "But those things ◀mean nothing to me/ do not make me happy▶ while I keep seeing that Jew, Mordecai, *just* sitting there at the gate of the palace *and ignoring me!*" ¹⁴ So Haman's wife Zeresh and all his friends *who were there* suggested, "*Why don't you quickly* set up ◀a gallows/posts on which to hang someone▶. Make it 75 feet tall. Then tomorrow morning ask the king to hang Mordecai on it. After that, you can go to the banquet with the king and be cheerful." That idea pleased Haman *very much*, so he gave *men* orders to set up the gallows/posts.

6

The king honored Mordecai

¹ That night the king was unable to sleep, so he *summoned* a servant *and* told *him* to bring the records of what had happened during all the time he had been king. *So the servant brought the records* and read some of them to the king. ² *The servant read about* Bigthana and Teresh, the two men who had guarded the entrance to the king's rooms. He read the account of when Mordecai had found out that they planned to assassinate the king *and that he had told the king about it.* ³ The king asked *some of his servants*, "What did we do to reward Mordecai or show that we appreciate what he did?" The servants replied, "We did not do anything for him." ⁴ At that moment, Haman entered the outer courtyard of

the palace. He wanted to talk to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows that he had *just* set up. The king *saw him and* said, “Who is *that out there* in the courtyard?” ⁵ His servants replied, “That is Haman standing there in the courtyard.” The king said, “Bring him in *here!*” ⁶ When Haman came in, the king asked him, “What should I do for a man whom I want to honor?” Haman thought to himself, “◀Whom would the king like to honor more than me?/I think there is no one whom the king would like to honor more than me!▶” [RHQ] ⁷ So he replied to the king, “If there is someone you wish to honor, ⁸ you should *tell your servants to bring him one of the robes you wear you to show that you are the king. Also tell them to bring one of the horses you have ridden. Tell them to put a fancy headdress on the horse’s head to show that it belongs to you, the king.* ⁹ Then tell one of your very important officials to put the robe on the man whom you want to honor, and tell that man to sit on the horse, and then lead the horse through the city streets. And tell that official to keep shouting, ‘This is what ◀the king does/is doing▶ for the man whom he wants to honor!’ ” ¹⁰ The king replied to Haman, “*Fine! Go and do what you said immediately! Get my robe and my horse, and do just what you suggested! Do it for Mordecai, the Jew, who is sitting outside at the gate of the palace. Do not forget anything that you suggested!*” ¹¹ So Haman did what the king said. He got the robe and the horse. He put the robe on Mordecai, and as Mordecai sat

on the horse, Haman led the horse through the city streets proclaiming “This is what the king ◀does/is doing▶ for the man whom the king wants to honor!” ¹² Then, Mordecai returned *and sat* at the gate of the palace. But Haman hurried home, covering his face *because he felt completely disgraced/humiliated*. ¹³ He told his wife Zeresh and his friends everything that had happened to him that day. Then his wife and his friends said to him, “Mordecai, the man who has caused you to be completely disgraced/humiliated, is a Jew. *It is clear that the God whom the Jews worship is fighting for them*. So you will never be able to defeat Mordecai. He will defeat you!” ¹⁴ And while they were still talking, some of the king’s officials arrived to take Haman quickly to the banquet/feast that Esther had prepared.

7

Haman was executed

¹ So the king and Haman went to eat the second banquet/feast that Queen Esther had prepared. ² As they were drinking wine, the king asked again, “Esther, what do you want me to do *for you? Tell me, and I will do it for you*. Even if *you ask me for half of my kingdom*, I will give it to you.” ³ Esther replied, “O king, if you are pleased with me, and if you are willing to do *what I ask*, save me, and save my people. That is what I want you to do for me. ⁴ *It is as though I and my people are cattle that have been sold to be slaughtered*.”

It is as though we have been sold to people who want to completely destroy us. If we had only been sold to people to become their male and female slaves, I would not say anything, because that would have been a matter too small to bother you, the king.” ⁵ Then King Xerxes asked her, “Who would want to do such a *terrible* thing? Where is he?” ⁶ Esther replied, “*The man who is our enemy is this evil man Haman!*” Then Haman was terrified as he stood in front of the king and queen. ⁷ The king became extremely angry. He immediately left his wine and got up and went outside into the palace garden *to decide what to do*. But Haman stayed, in order to plead with Queen Esther that she would spare his life. ⁸ He threw himself down on the couch where Esther was reclining. But at that moment the king returned from the garden to the room where they had been eating. *He saw Haman, and assumed he was preparing to rape Esther*. He exclaimed, “Are you going to rape the queen while she is here with me in my own palace?” As soon as the king said that, some officials covered Haman’s head, *as they did to people who were about to be hanged*. ⁹ Then Harbona, one of the king’s personal officials, said, “*Outside, near Haman’s house, there is a ◀gallows/set of poles for hanging someone▶. It is 75 feet high. Haman made it for Mordecai, the man who spared your life!*” The king said, “Hang him on it!” ¹⁰ So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for hanging Mordecai! And then ◀the king’s anger cooled off/the king was no longer so

angry▶.

8

The king issued a decree to save the Jews

¹ Later on that same day, King Xerxes declared that everything that Haman, the enemy of the Jews, owned, would now belong to Queen Esther. Esther told the king that Mordecai was her cousin. *When the king heard that, he sent a message to tell Mordecai to come in.* ² When Mordecai came in, the king took off the ring that had his official seal on it, the ring that he had *previously* given to Haman, and gave it to Mordecai, *to indicate that Mordecai was now his most important official.* And Esther appointed Mordecai to be in charge of everything that had belonged to Haman.

³ Esther again *came to* talk to the king. She prostrated herself at his feet, crying. She *wanted to* plead for him to stop what Haman had planned, to kill all the Jews. ⁴ The king held out his gold scepter/staff toward Esther, so Esther arose and stood in front of him. ⁵ She said, “Your majesty, if you are pleased with me, and if you think that it is the right thing to do, make a new law to cancel what Haman decreed, that all the Jews in all the provinces in your empire should be killed. ⁶ I cannot bear seeing all my family and *all the rest of* my people killed.” ⁷ King Xerxes replied to Queen Esther and Mordecai, “Because Haman tried to get rid of all the Jews, I have given to Esther everything that belonged

to Haman, and I have ordered *my soldiers* to hang Haman. ⁸ So now I am also permitting you to write other letters, to *save* your people. You may put my name *on the letters*, and use my ring to seal them because no letter that has my name on it and which is sealed with my ring can ever be changed.” ⁹ Then the king summoned his secretaries, on June 25th, and *Mordecai told them* to write letters to the Jews and to all the governors and other officials in all of the 127 provinces, which extended from India *in the east* to Ethiopia *in the west*. They wrote these letters in all the languages that the people in each area spoke. They also wrote letters to the Jewish people, in their language. ¹⁰⁻¹¹ They wrote in those letters that the Jews in every city were permitted by the king to gather together to protect themselves. They also were permitted to kill any group of soldiers who attacked them. They were also permitted to kill the women and children of those who attacked them, and to take the possessions of the people whom they killed. ¹² *All this was to be done* on March 7th of the following year. Mordecai signed the king’s name on the letters, and sealed them with the seal that was on the king’s ring. Then he gave them to messengers, who rode on fast horses that had been raised especially for the king. ¹³ Copies of this law were to be nailed to posts in every province and read to all the people, in order that the Jews would be ready to ◀get revenge on/fight against▶ their enemies on March 7th. ¹⁴ The king commanded the men who took these letters

to all the provinces to ride quickly on the king's horses. And copies of the letter were also posted and read to the people in *the capital city, Susa*.¹⁵ Before Mordecai left the palace, he put on the blue and white robe and a large gold crown that the king had given him. He also put on a coat made of fine purple cloth. When the people in Susa heard the new law, they all shouted and cheered.¹⁶ The Jews in Susa were very happy, and *other people* honored *them*.¹⁷ And when the new law arrived in every city and province, the Jews there celebrated and prepared feasts and were very joyful. And many men throughout the empire *were circumcised and* became Jews, because they were now afraid of *what* the Jews *would do to them if they were not Jews*.

9

¹ The first law that the king had commanded was to be made effective on March 7th. On that day the enemies of the Jews hoped to get rid of them. But instead, on that same day the Jews defeated their enemies.² Throughout the empire, the Jews gathered together in their cities to attack those who wanted to get rid of them. No one could fight against the Jews, because all the other people in the areas where the Jews lived were afraid of them, *so they did not want to help anyone who attacked the Jews*.³ All the governors and *other* officials and important people in all the provinces helped the Jews, because they were afraid of Mordecai.⁴ They were afraid of him because in all the

provinces *they knew that* Mordecai was now the king's most important official, *with the authority that Haman previously had*. Mordecai was becoming more famous because *the king was giving him* more and more power. ⁵ *On March 7th*, the Jews attacked and killed with their swords all of their enemies. They did whatever they wanted to do, to the people who hated them. ⁶ *Just* in Susa alone, the capital city, they killed 500 people. ⁷ Among those whom they killed were the ten sons of Haman. *Their names were* Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, ⁸ Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, ⁹ Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha. ¹⁰ Those were grandsons of Hammedatha and sons of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. The Jews killed them, but they did not take the things that belonged to the people whom they killed. ¹¹ *At the end of* that day someone reported to the king the number of people whom the Jews killed in Susa. ¹² Then the king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed 500 people here in Susa, including the ten sons of Haman! *So I think that* they must have killed many more people in the rest of my empire [RHQ]! *But okay*, now what else do you want me to do for you. You tell me, and I will do it." ¹³ Esther replied, "If it pleases you, allow the Jews here in Susa to do again tomorrow what *you* commanded *them* to do today. And command that the bodies of Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows/poles." ¹⁴ So the king commanded that the Jews be permitted to kill more of their enemies the

next day. After he issued *another* order in Susa, the bodies of Haman's ten sons were hanged. ¹⁵ On the next day, the Jews in Susa gathered together and killed 300 more people. But *again*, they did not take the things that belonged to the people whom they killed. ¹⁶ That happened on March 8th. On the following day, the Jews *in Susa* rested and celebrated. In all the other provinces, the Jewish people gathered together to defend themselves, and they killed 75,000 people who hated them, but *again* they did not take the things that belonged to the people whom they killed. ¹⁷ That occurred on March 7th, and on the following day they rested and celebrated. ¹⁸ After the Jews in Susa gathered together *and killed their enemies* on March 7th and 8th, they rested and celebrated on March 9th. ¹⁹ That is why *every year*, on March 8th, the Jews who live in villages now celebrate *defeating their enemies*. They have feasts and give gifts *of food* to each other. ²⁰ Mordecai wrote down all the things that had happened. Then he sent letters to the Jews who lived throughout the empire of King Xerxes. ²¹ He told them that every year they should celebrate on the 8th and 9th of March, ²² because those were the days when the Jews got rid of their enemies. He also told them that they should celebrate on those days by feasting and giving gifts *of food* to each other and to poor people. They would remember it as the month in which they changed from being very sorrowful to being very joyful, from crying to celebrating. ²³ So the Jews agreed

to do what Mordecai wrote. They agreed to celebrate on those days *every year*. ²⁴ They would remember how Haman, son of Hammedatha, a descendant of *King Agag*, became an enemy of all the Jews. *They would remember* how he had made an evil plan to kill the Jews, and that he had ◀cast lots/thrown small marked stones▶ to choose the day to kill [DOU] them. ²⁵ *They would remember* that when Esther told the king about Haman's plan, the king arranged that the evil plan that Haman had made to kill the Jews would fail, and that he *would be killed* instead of the Jews, and that Haman and that his sons were hanged. ²⁶ *Because the* ◀lot/small marked stone▶ *that Haman threw was called Pur*, the Jews called these days Purim. And, because of everything that ◀Mordecai wrote/was written▶ in that letter, and because of all that happened to them, ²⁷ the Jews *throughout the empire* agreed to celebrate in that manner on those two days every year. They said that they would tell their descendants and those people who became Jews to be certain to celebrate this festival every year. They should celebrate just as *Mordecai* told them to do *in the letter* that he wrote. ²⁸ They said that they would remember and celebrate on those two days every year, in each family, in every city, and in every province. They solemnly declared that they and their descendants would never stop remembering and celebrating those days called Purim. ²⁹ Then Mordecai and Queen Esther, who was the daughter of Abihail, wrote a second letter about the Purim feast. Esther

used the authority that she had because of being the queen to confirm that what Mordecai had written in the first letter was true. ³⁰⁻³¹ What they wrote *in the second letter* was, “We wish that all of you will be living peacefully and safely/righteously. We want you and your descendants to celebrate Purim each year on the days that we two established, and to do the things that we two told you to do.” In that letter, Queen Esther and Mordecai also gave them instructions about ◀fasting/abstaining from eating food▶ and being sorrowful. Then copies of that letter were sent to all the Jews who were living in the 127 provinces of the empire. ³² The letter that Esther wrote about the manner in which they should celebrate the Purim feast was also written in an official record.

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¹ King Xerxes required that all the people in his empire pay taxes. Even the people who lived on the islands *in the Mediterranean Sea* (OR, in coastal areas) were required to pay taxes. ² And all the great and powerful things that Xerxes did were written in the scroll called/entitled ‘The record of the things done by the kings of Media and Persia’. In this book were also written *the things done* by Mordecai, the man whom the king had greatly honored. ³ Mordecai, who was a Jew, became the king’s most important official, and *all* the Jews also considered him to be a very great man. They *all* respected him, because he did many good things for the Jews, and he often asked *the king* to do good things for them.

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