

ESTHER

¹ [In the second year of the reign of Artaxerxes the great king, on the first *day* of Nisan, Mardocheaus the son of Jarius, the son of Semeias, the son of Cisaus, of the tribe of Benjamine, a Jew dwelling in the city Susa, a great man, serving in the king's palace, saw a vision. Now he was of the captivity which Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon had carried captive from Jerusalem, with Jachonias the king of Judea. And this was his dream: Behold, voices and a noise, thunders and earthquake, tumult upon the earth. And, behold, two great serpents came forth, both ready for conflict, and there came from them a great voice, and by their voice every nation was prepared for battle, even to fight against the nation of the just. And, behold, a day of darkness and blackness, tribulation and anguish, affliction and tumult upon the earth. And all the righteous nation was troubled, fearing their own afflictions; and they prepared to die, and cried to God: and from their cry there came as it were a great river from a little fountain, *even* much water. And light and the sun arose, and the lowly were exalted, and devoured the honorable. And Mardocheaus who had seen this vision and what God desired to do, having ^{*}awoke, kept it in his heart, and desired by all means to interpret it, even till night. And Mardocheaus rested quiet in the palace with Gabatha and Tharrha the king's two chamberlains, eunuchs who guarded the palace. And he heard their reasoning and searched out their plans, and learned that they were preparing to lay hands on

* 1:1 Or, arisen.

king Artaxerxes: and he informed the king concerning them. And the king examined the two chamberlains, and they confessed, and were † executed. And the king wrote these things for a memorial: also Mardocheaus wrote concerning these matters. And the king commanded Mardocheaus to attend in the palace, and gave gifts for this service. And Aman the son of Amadathes the Bugean was honorable in the sight of the king, and he endeavored to hurt Mardocheaus and his people, because of the two chamberlains of the king.] ‡ And it came to pass after these § things in the days of Artaxerxes, —(this Artaxerxes ruled over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India)—² in those days, when king Artaxerxes was on the throne in the city of Susa,³ in the third year of his reign, he made a feast to his friends, and the other nations, and to the nobles of the Persians and Medes, and the chief of the satraps.⁴ And after this, after he had shown to them the wealth of his kingdom, and the abundant glory of his wealth during a hundred and eighty days,⁵ when, *I say*, the days of the marriage feast were completed, the king made a banquet to the nations who were present in the city six days, in the court of the king's house,⁶ *which was* adorned with *hangings* of fine linen and flax on cords of fine linen and purple, fastened to golden and silver studs, on pillars of Parian marble and stone: *there were* golden and silver couches on a pavement of emerald stone, and of pearl, and of Parian stone,^{**} and open-worked coverings variously flowered, *having* roses worked round about;⁷ gold and silver cups, and a small cup of carbuncle set out of the value of thirty

† 1:1 Lit led away, see Acts 12. 19.
copies of LXX, Esther begins here.

‡ 1:1 Note. - In the Heb. and some
§ 1:1 Gr. words. ** 1:6 Lit.

transparent.

thousand talents, abundant and sweet wine, which the king himself drank. ⁸ And this banquet was not according to the appointed law; but so the king would have it: and he charged the stewards to perform his will and that of the company. ⁹ Also Astin the queen made a banquet for the women in the palace where king Artaxerxes *lived*. ¹⁰ Now on the seventh day the king, being merry, told Aman, and Bazan, and Tharrha, and Barazi, and Zatholtha, and Abataza, and Tharaba, the seven chamberlains, servants of king Artaxerxes, ¹¹ to 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. ¹² But queen Astin listened not to him to come with the chamberlains: so the king was grieved and angered. ¹³ And he said to his friends, Thus have Astin spoken: pronounce therefore upon this *case* law and judgment. ¹⁴ So Arkesaeus, and 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, ¹⁵ and reported to him according to the laws how it was proper to do to queen Astin, because she had not done the things commanded of the king by the chamberlains. ¹⁶ And Muchaeus said to the king and to the princes, Queen Astin has not wronged the king only, but also all the king's rulers and princes: ¹⁷ for he has told them the words of the queen, and how she ‡‡ disobeyed the king. As then, *said he*, she refused to *obey* king Artaxerxes, ¹⁸ so this day shall the other ladies of the chiefs of the Persians and Medes, having heard what she said to the king, dare in the same way to dishonor their husbands. ¹⁹ If then it seem good to the king, let him make a royal decree, and let it be written according to the laws

†† 1:11 Gr. to make her queen. ‡‡ 1:17 Gr. contradicted.

of the Medes and Persians, and let him not alter *it*: and let not the queen come in to him any more; and let the king give her royalty to a woman better than she. ²⁰ And let the law of the king which he shall have made, be widely proclaimed, in his kingdom: and so shall all the women give honor to their husbands, from the poor even to the rich. ²¹ And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did as Muchaeus had said, ²² and sent into all his kingdom through the several provinces, according to their language, §§ in order that men might be feared in their own houses.

2

¹ And after this the king's anger was pacified, and he no more mentioned Astin, bearing in mind what she had said, and how he had condemned her. ² Then the servants of the king said, Let there be sought for the king chaste *and* beautiful young virgins. ³ And let the king appoint local governors in all the provinces of his kingdom, and let them select fair *and* chaste young damsels *and bring them* to the city Susa, into the women's apartment, and let them be consigned to the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women; and let things for purification and other attendance be given *to them*. ⁴ And let the woman who shall please the king be queen instead of Astin. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so. ⁵ Now there was a Jew in the city Susa, and his name was Mardocheus, the son of Jairus, *the son of Semeias, the son of Cisaeus*, of the tribe of Benjamin; ⁶ who had been brought a prisoner from Jerusalem, which Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon had carried into captivity. ⁷ And he had a foster child, daughter of Aminadab his father's brother, and her

§§ 1:22 Gr. that there might be fear to them, etc.

name was Esther; and when her parents were dead, he brought her up for a wife for himself: and the damsel was beautiful. ⁸ And because the king's ordinance was published, many damsels were gathered to the city Susa under the hand of Gai; and Esther was brought to Gai the keeper of the women. ⁹ And the damsel pleased him, and she found favor in his sight; and he hastened to give her the things for purification, and her portion, and the seven maidens appointed her out of the palace: and he treated her and her maidens well in the women's apartment. ¹⁰ But Esther didn't reveal her family nor her kindred: for Mardocheus had charged her not to tell. ¹¹ But Mardocheus used to walk every day by the women's court, to see what would become of Esther. ¹² Now this was the time for a virgin to go into the king, when she should have fulfilled 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. ¹³ And then *the damsel* goes in to the king; and *the officer* to whoever he shall give the command, will bring her to come in with him from the women's apartment to the king's chamber. ¹⁴ She enters in the evening, and in the morning she departs to the second women's apartment, where Gai the king's chamberlain is keeper of the women: and she goes not in to the king again, unless she should be called by name. ¹⁵ And when the time was fulfilled for Esther the daughter of Aminadab the brother of Mardocheus' 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 that looked upon her. ¹⁶ So Esther went in to king Artaxerxes in the twelfth month, which is Adar, in the seventh year of his reign.

¹⁷ And the king loved Esther, and she found favor beyond all the *other* virgins: and he put on her the queen's crown. ¹⁸ And the king made a banquet for all his friends and great men for seven days, and he highly celebrated the marriage of Esther; and he made a release to those who were under his dominion. ¹⁹ But Mardocheaus served in the palace. ²⁰ Now Esther had not revealed her * kindred; for so Mardocheaus commanded her, to fear God, and perform his commandments, as when she was with him: and Esther changed not her manner of life. ²¹ And two chamberlains of the king, the chiefs of the body-guard, were grieved, because Mardocheaus was promoted; and they sought to kill king Artaxerxes. ²² And the matter was revealed to Mardocheaus, and he made it known to Esther, and she declared to the king the matter of the conspiracy. ²³ And the king examined the two chamberlains, and hanged them: and the king gave orders to make a note for a memorial in the royal † records of the good offices of Mardocheaus, as a commendation.

3

¹ And after this king Artaxerxes highly honored Aman son of Amadathes, the Bugaeon, and exalted him, and set his seat above all his friends. ² And all in the palace did him obeisance, for so the king had given orders to do: but Mardocheaus did not do him obeisance. ³ And they in the king's palace said to Mardocheaus, Mardocheaus, why do you transgress the commands of the king? ⁴ Thus they spoke daily to him, but he listened not to them; so they represented to Aman that Mardocheaus resisted the commands of the king: and Mardocheaus had shown to them that he was a Jew. ⁵ And when Aman understood that

* 2:20 Gr. country. † 2:23 Gr. library.

Mardocheaus did not obeisance to him, he was greatly enraged,⁶ and took counsel to destroy utterly all the Jews who were under the rule of Artaxerxes.⁷ And he made a * decree in the twelfth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, and cast lots daily and monthly, to kill in one day the race of Mardocheaus: and the lot fell on the fourteenth day of the month which is Adar.⁸ And he spoke to king Artaxerxes, saying, There is a nation scattered among the nations in all your kingdom, and their laws differ from *those of all the other* nations; and they disobey the laws of the king; and it is not expedient for the king to let them alone.⁹ If 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.¹⁰ And the king took off his ring, and gave it into the hands of Aman, to seal the decrees against the Jews.¹¹ And the king said to Aman, Keep the silver, and treat the nation as you will.¹² So the king's recorders were called in the first month, on the thirteenth day, and they wrote as Aman commanded to the captains and governors in every province, from India even to Ethiopia, to a hundred and twenty-seven provinces; and to the rulers of the nations according to their *several* languages, in the name of king Artaxerxes.¹³ And *the message* was sent by posts throughout the kingdom of Artaxerxes, to destroy utterly the race of the Jews on the first day of the twelfth month, which is Adar, and to plunder their goods. † [And the following is the copy of the letter; The great king Artaxerxes writes thus to the rulers and inferior governors of a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India even to Ethiopia, who hold authority under *him*. Ruling over many nations and

* 3:7 Gr. vote by ballot. † 3:13 Note. - The part in brackets is not in Heb.

having obtained dominion over the whole world, I was minded (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. But when I had enquired of my counselors how this should be brought to pass. Aman, who excels in soundness of judgment among 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 mixed up with 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 *alone of all others* 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 signified to you in the letter written by Aman, 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 aforesaid 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*.] ¹⁴ And the copies of the letters were published in every province; and an order was given to all the nations to be ready against that day. ¹⁵ And the business was hastened, and *that* at Susa:

and the king and Aman began to drink; but the city was troubled.

4

¹ But Mardocheaus having perceived what was done, tore his garments, and put on sackcloth, and sprinkled dust upon himself; and 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. ² And he came to the king's gate, and stood; for it was not lawful for him to enter into the palace, wearing sackcloth and ashes. ³ And in every province where the letters were published, *there was crying and lamentation and great mourning on the part of the Jews: they spread for themselves sackcloth and ashes.* ⁴ And the queen's maids and chamberlains went in and told her: and when she had heard what was done, she was disturbed; and she sent to clothe Mardocheaus, and take away his sackcloth; but he consented not. ⁵⁻⁶ So Esther called for her chamberlain Achmethas, who waited upon her; and she sent to learn the truth from Mardocheaus. ⁷ And Mardocheaus showed him what was done, and the promise which Aman had made the king of ten thousand talents *to be paid* into the treasury, that he might destroy the Jews. ⁸ And he gave him the copy *of the writing* that 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, remembering, *said he*, the days of your low estate, how you were nursed by my hand: because Aman who holds the next place to the king has spoken against us for death. Do you call upon the Lord, and speak to the king concerning us, to deliver us from death. ⁹ So Achmethas went in and told her all these words. ¹⁰ And Esther said to Achmethas, Go to

Mardocheaus, and say, ¹¹ All the nations of the empire know, that whoever, man or woman, shall go in to the king into the inner court uncalled, that person can't live: only to whoever the king shall stretch out *his* golden sceptre, he shall live: and I have not been called to go into the king, for these thirty days. ¹² And Achraethaeus reported to Mardocheaus all the words of Esther. ¹³ Then Mardocheaus said to Achraethaeus, Go, and say to her, Esther, say not to yourself that you alone will escape in the kingdom, more than all the *other* Jews. ¹⁴ For if you shall refuse to listen on this occasion, help and protection will be to the Jews from another quarter; but you and your father's house will perish: and who knows, if you have been made queen for this *very* occasion? ¹⁵ And Esther sent the *man* that came to her to Mardocheaus, saying, ¹⁶ Go and assemble the Jews that are in Susa, and fast you° for me, and eat not and drink not for three days, night and day: and I also and my maidens will fast; and then I will go in to the king contrary to the law, even if I must die. ¹⁷ So Mardocheaus went and did all that Esther commanded him. * [And he implored the Lord, making mention of all the works of the Lord; and he said, Lord † God, king ruling over all, for all things are in your power, and there is no one that shall oppose you, in your purpose to save Israel. - For you have made the heaven and the earth and every wonderful thing in the *world* under heaven. And you are Lord of all, and there is no one who shall resist you Lord. You know all things: you know, Lord, that it is not in insolence, nor haughtiness, nor love of glory, that I have done this, to refuse obeisance to the haughty Aman. For I would

* 4:17 Note. - The part between brackets, i.e. to the end of chap. iv. is not in the Heb. † 4:17 See 3 Kings 8. 53. Note.

gladly have kissed the soles of his feet for the safety of Israel. But I have done this, that I might not set the glory of man above the glory of God: and I will not worship any one except you, my Lord, and I will not do these things in haughtiness. And now, O Lord God, the King, the God of Abraam, spare your people, for *our enemies* are looking upon us to *our* destruction, and they have desired to destroy your ancient inheritance. Do not overlook your ‡ peculiar people, whom you have redeemed for yourself out of the land of Egypt. Listen to my prayer, and be propitious to your inheritance, and turn our mourning into gladness, that we may live and sing praise to your name, O Lord; and do not utterly destroy the mouth of them that praise you, O Lord. And all Israel cried with *all* their might, for death was before their eyes. And queen Esther betook herself for refuge to the Lord, being taken *as it were* in the agony of death. And having taken off her glorious apparel, she put on garments of distress and mourning; and instead of grand perfumes she filled her head with ashes and dung, and she greatly brought down her body, and she filled every place of her glad adorning with the *torn* curls of her hair. And she implored the Lord God of Israel, and said, O my Lord, you alone are our king: help me *who am* destitute, and have no helper but you, for my danger is § near at hand. I 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 wrought for them all that you have said. And now we have sinned before you, and you have delivered us into the hands of our enemies, because we honored their gods:

‡ 4:17 Gr. portion. § 4:17 Gr. in my hand.

you are righteous, O Lord. But now they have not been contented with the bitterness of our slavery, but have laid their hands on the hands of their idols, *in order* to abolish the decree of your mouth, and utterly to destroy your inheritances, and to stop the mouth of them that praise you, and to extinguish the glory of your house and your altar, and to open the mouth of the Gentiles to *speak* the ** praises of vanities, and *in order* that a mortal king should be admired for ever. O Lord, do not resign your sceptre to them that are not, and let them not laugh at our fall, but turn their counsel against themselves and make an example of him who has †† begun to injure us. Remember us, O Lord, manifest yourself in the time of our affliction, and encourage me, O King of gods, and ruler of all dominion. Put harmonious speech into my mouth before the lion, and turn his heart to hate him that fights against us, to the utter destruction of him that consent with him. But deliver us by your hand, and help me *who am* destitute, and have none but the, O Lord. You know all things, and know that I hate the ‡‡ glory of transgressors, and that I abhor the couch of the uncircumcised, and of every stranger. You know my necessity, for I abhor the symbol of my proud station, which is upon my head in the days of my §§ splendor: I abhor it as a menstruous cloth, and I wear it not in the days of my tranquility. And your handmaid has not eaten *at* the table of Aman, and I have not honored the banquet of the king, neither have I drunk wine of libations. Neither has your handmaid rejoiced since the day of my promotion until now, except in you, O Lord God of Abraam. O god, who has power over all,

** 4:17 Gr. virtues. †† 4:17 Gr. begun against us. ‡‡ 4:17 Or, opinion. §§ 4:17 Gr. vision. q. d. quo die spectanda fui.

listen to the voice of the desperate, and deliver us from the hand of them that devise mischief; and deliver me from my fear.]

5

¹ * And it came to pass on the third day, when she had ceased praying, that she put off her mean dress, and put on her glorious apparel. And being splendidly arrayed, *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. And she was blooming in the perfection of her beauty; and her face was cheerful, and *it were* benevolent, but her heart was straitened for fear. And having passed through all the doors, she stood before the king: and he was sitting upon his royal throne, and he had put on all his glorious apparel, *covered* all over with gold and precious stones, and was very terrible. And having raised his face resplendent with glory, he looked with intense anger: and the queen fell, and changed her color as she fainted; and she bowed herself upon the head of the maid that 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: and he comforted her with peaceful words, and said to her, What is *the matter*, Esther? I *am* your brother; be of good cheer, you shall not die, for our command is openly declared *to you*, Draw near. ² And having raised the golden sceptre he laid it upon her neck, and embraced her, and said, Speak to me. And she said to him, I saw you, *my lord*, as an angel of God, and my heart was troubled for fear of

* [5:1](#) From the first verse to the third, theGr. widely differs from the Heb.

your glory; for you, *my lord*, are to be wondered at, and your face *is full of grace*. And while she was speaking, she fainted and fell. Then the king was troubled, and all his servants comforted her. ³ And the king said, What will you, Esther? and what is your request? *ask* even to the half of my kingdom, and it shall be yours. ⁴ And Esther said, To-day is my great day: if then it seem good to the king, let both him and Aman come to the feast which I will prepare this day. ⁵ And the king said, Hasten Aman hither, that we may perform the word of Esther. So they both come to the feast of which Esther had spoken. ⁶ And at the banquet the king said to Esther, What is *your request*, queen Esther? *speak*, and you shall have all that you require. ⁷ And she said, My request and my petition *are*: ⁸ if I have found favor in the sight of the king, let the king and Aman come again to-morrow to the feast which I shall prepare for them, and to-morrow I will do the same. ⁹ So Aman went out from the king very glad *and merry*: but when Aman saw Mardocheus the Jew in the court, he was greatly enraged. ¹⁰ And having gone into his own house, he called his friends, and his wife Zosara. ¹¹ And he showed them his wealth, and the glory with which the king had invested him, and how he had caused him to take precedence and bear chief rule in the kingdom. ¹² And Aman said, The queen has called no one to the feast with the king but me, and I am invited to-morrow. ¹³ But these things please me not, while I see Mardocheus the Jew in the court. ¹⁴ And Zosara his wife and his friends said to him, Let there be a † gallows made for you of fifty cubits, and in the morning do you speak to the king, and let Mardocheus be hanged on the gallows: but do you go in to the feast with the king, and be merry. And the saying

† 5:14 Gr. a tree cut.

pleased Aman, and the gallows was prepared.

6

¹ But the Lord removed sleep from the king that night: and he told his servant to bring in the * books, the registers of daily events, to read to him. ² And he found the † records written concerning Mardocheaus, how he had told the king concerning the two chamberlains of the king, when they were keeping guard, and sought to lay hands on Artaxerxes. ³ And the king said, What honor or favor have we done to Mardocheaus? And the king's servants said, You have not done anything to him. ⁴ And while the king was enquiring about the kindness of Mardocheaus, behold, Aman was in the court. And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Aman was come in to speak to the king, that he should hang Mardocheaus on the gallows, which he had prepared. ⁵ And the king's servants said, Behold, Aman stands in the court. And the king said, Call him. ⁶ And the king said to Aman, What shall I do to the man whom I wish to honor? And Aman said within himself, Whom would the king honor but myself? ⁷ and he said to the king, As for the man whom the king wishes to honor, ⁸ let the king's servants bring the robe of fine linen which the king puts on, and the horse on which the king rides, ⁹ and let him give it to one of the king's noble friends, and let him array the man whom the king loves; and let him mount him on the horse, and proclaim through the ‡ street of the city, saying, Thus shall it be *done* to every man whom the king honors. ¹⁰ Then the king said to Aman, You have well said: so do to Mardocheaus the Jew, who waits in the palace, and let not a word of what you have spoken be neglected. ¹¹ So Aman

* 6:1 Gr. letters. † 6:2 Gr. letters. ‡ 6:9 Or, wide space.

took the robe and the horse, and arrayed Mardocheaus, and mounted him on the horse, and went through the street of the city, and proclaimed, saying, Thus shall it be to every man whom the king wishes to honor. ¹² And Mardocheaus returned to the palace: but Aman went home mourning, and having his head covered. ¹³ And Aman related the events that had befallen him to Zosara his wife, and to *his* friends: and his friends and his wife said to him, § If Mardocheaus *be* 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. ¹⁴ While they were yet speaking, the chamberlains arrived, to hasten Aman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

7

¹ So the king and Aman went in to drink with the queen. ² And the king said to Esther at the banquet on the second day, What is it, queen Esther? and what *is* your request, and what *is* your petition? and it shall be *done* for you, to the half of my kingdom. ³ And she answered and said, If I have found favor in the sight of the king, let *my* life be granted to my petition, and my people to my request. ⁴ For both I and my people are sold for destruction, and pillage, and slavery; *both* we and our children for bondmen and bondwomen: and I consented not to it, for the slanderer * *is* not worthy of the king's palace. ⁵ And the king said, Who *is* this that has dared to do this thing? ⁶ And Esther said, the † adversary *is* Aman, this wicked man. Then Aman was troubled before the king and the queen. ⁷ And the king rose up from the

§ 6:13 Or, if it be M. etc. before whom. * 7:4 see Heb. slanderer

† 7:6 Gr. hostile man.

banquet to go into the garden: and Aman began to entreat the queen; for he saw that he was in † an evil case. ⁸ And the king returned from the garden; and Aman had fallen upon the bed, intreating the queen. And the king said, Will you even force *my* wife in my house? And when Aman heard it, he changed countenance. ⁹ And Bugathan, one of the chamberlains, said to the king, Behold, Aman has also prepared a gallows for Mardocheaus, who spoke concerning the king, and a gallows of fifty cubits high has been set up in the premises of Aman. And the king said, Let him be § hanged thereon. ¹⁰ So Aman was hanged on the gallows that had been prepared for Mardocheaus: and then the king's wrath was appeased.

8

¹ And in that day king Artaxerxes gave to Esther all that belonged to Aman the slanderer: and Mardocheaus was called by the king; for Esther had shown that he was related to her. ² And the king took the ring which he had taken away from Aman, and gave it to Mardocheaus: and Esther appointed Mardocheaus over all that had been Aman's. ³ And she spoke yet again to the king, and fell at his feet, and implored *him* to do away the mischief of Aman, and all that he had done against the Jews. ⁴ Then the king stretched out to Esther the golden sceptre: and Esther arose to stand near the king. ⁵ And Esther said, If it seem good to you, and I have found favor *in your sight*, let an order be sent that the letters sent by Aman may be reversed, that were written for the destruction of the Jews, who are in your kingdom. ⁶ For how shall I be able to look upon the affliction of my people, and

† 7:7 Gr. evils. § 7:9 Or, impaled.

how shall I be able to survive the destruction of my * kindred? ⁷ And the king said to Esther, If I have given and freely granted you all that was Aman's, and hanged him on a gallows, because he laid his hands upon the Jews, what do you yet further seek? ⁸ Write you° also in my name, as it seems good to you, and seal *it* with my ring: for whatever *orders* are written at the command of the king, and sealed with my ring, it is not † lawful to gainsay them. ⁹ So the scribes were called in the first month, which is Nisan, on the three and twentieth 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 satraps, from India even to Ethiopia, a hundred and twenty-seven satraps, according to the several provinces, according to their dialects. ¹⁰ And they were written by order of the king, and sealed with his ring, and they sent the letters by the posts: ¹¹ wherein he charged them to use their *own* laws in every city, and to help each other, and to treat their adversaries, and those who attacked them, as they pleased, ¹² on one day in all the kingdom of Artaxerxes, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is Adar. ¹³ And 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. And the following is the copy of the letter of the orders. § [The great king Artaxerxes sends greetings to the rulers of provinces *in* a hundred and twenty-seven satraps, from India to Ethiopia, even to those who are faithful to our interests. Many who have been frequently honored by the most

* 8:6 Gr. country. † 8:8 Or, possible ‡ 8:9 Gr. stewards. § 8:13 the passages in brackets are not in the Hebrew.

abundant kindness of their ^{**} benefactors have conceived ambitious designs, and not only endeavor to hurt our subjects, but moreover, not being able to bear prosperity, they also endeavor to plot against their own benefactors. And they not only would utterly abolish gratitude from among men, but also, elated by the boastings of men who are strangers to all that is good, they supposed that they shall 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 candour of the ruling powers. And it is possible to see *this*, not so much from more ancient traditionary 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. And *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 decision. For whereas Aman, a Macedonian, the son of Amadathes, in reality an alien from the blood of the Persians, and differing widely from our mild course of government, having been hospitable 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, revered of all; *he however*, ‡‡ overcome by

^{**} 8:13 perhaps rulers, see Luke 22. 25. †† 8:13 Gr. contrived.

‡‡ 8:13 Gr. not having borne.

the pride of *his station*, endeavored to deprive us of our dominion, and our §§ life: having by various and subtle artifices demanded for destruction both Mardocheaus our deliverer and perpetual benefactor, and Esther the blameless consort of *our kingdom*, 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 justest 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 Aman the son of Amadathes, because he that 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 recompence, *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*. Do you° therefore also, among your *notable* feasts, 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 toward 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

§§ 8:13 Gr. spirit. *** 8:13 Gr. thrice guilty. ††† 8:13 Gr. greatest.

vengeance by spear and fire: it shall be made not only inaccessible to men, but most hateful to wild beasts and birds for ever.] And 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. ¹⁴ So the horsemen went forth with haste to perform the king's commands; and the ordinance was also published in Susa. ¹⁵ And Mardocheus went forth robed in the royal apparel, and wearing a golden crown, and a diadem of fine purple linen: and the people in Susa saw *it* and rejoiced. ¹⁶ And the Jews had light and gladness, ¹⁷ in every city and province wherever the ordinance was published: wherever the proclamation took place, the Jews had joy and gladness, feasting and mirth: and many of the Gentiles were circumcised, and became Jews, for fear of the Jews.

9

¹ For in the twelfth month, on the thirteenth day of the month which is Adar, the letters written by the king arrived. ² In that day the adversaries of the Jews perished: for no one resisted, through fear of them. ³ For the chiefs of the satraps, and the princes and the royal scribes, honored the Jews; for the fear of Mardocheus lay upon them. ⁴⁻⁵ For the order of the king was in force, that he should be celebrated in all the kingdom. ⁶ And in the city Susa the Jews killed five hundred men: ⁷ both Pharsannes, and Delphon and Phasga, ⁸ and Pharadatha, and Barea, and Sarbaca, ⁹ and Marmasima, and Ruphaeus, and Arsaesus, and Zabuthaeus, ¹⁰ the ten sons of Aman the son of Amadathes the Bugaeon, the enemy of the Jews, and they plundered *their property* on the same day: ¹¹ and the number of them that perished in Susa was rendered to the king. ¹² And the king said to Esther, The Jews

have slain five hundred men in the city Susa; and how, think you, have they used them in the rest of the country? What then do you yet ask, that it may be *done* for you? ¹³ And Esther said to the king, let it be granted to the Jews so to treat them tomorrow as to hand the ten sons of Aman. ¹⁴ And he permitted it to be so done; and he gave up to the Jews of the city the bodies of the sons of Aman to hang. ¹⁵ And the Jews assembled in Susa on the fourteenth *day* of Adar, and killed three hundred men, but plundered no property. ¹⁶ And the 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. ¹⁷ And they rested on the fourteenth of the same month, and kept it as a day of rest with joy and gladness. ¹⁸ And the Jews in the city Susa assembled also on the fourteenth *day* and rested; and they kept also the fifteenth with joy and gladness. ¹⁹ On this account then *it is that* the Jews dispersed in every foreign land keep the fourteenth of Adar as a * holy day with joy, sending portions each to his neighbor. ²⁰ And Mardocheaus wrote these things in a book, and sent them to the Jews, as many as were in the kingdom of Artaxerxes, both them that were near and them that were afar off, ²¹ to establish these as joyful days, and to keep the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar; ²² for on these days the Jews obtained rest from their enemies; and as to the month, which was Adar, in which a change was made for them, from mourning to joy, and from sorrow to a good day, to spend the whole of it *in* good days of † feasting and gladness, sending portions to their friends, and to the poor. ²³ And the Jews consented *to this* accordingly as Mardocheaus wrote

* 9:19 Gr. good day. † 9:22 Gr. weddings.

to them, ²⁴ *showing* how Aman the son of Amadathes the Macedonian fought against them, how he made a decree and cast † lots to destroy them utterly; ²⁵ also how he went in to the king, telling *him* to hang Mardocheaus: but all the calamities he tried to bring upon the Jews came upon himself, and he was hanged, and his children. ²⁶ Therefore these days were called Phruræ, because of the lots; (for in their language they are called Phruræ;) because of the words of this letter, and *because of* all they suffered on this account, and all that happened to them. ²⁷ And *Mardocheaus* established it, and the Jews took upon themselves, and upon their seed, and upon those that 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, and city, and family, and province. ²⁸ And these days of the Phruræ, *said they*, shall be kept for ever, and their memorial shall not fail in any generation. ²⁹⁻³⁰ And queen Esther, the daughter of Aminadab, and Mardocheaus the Jew, wrote all that they had done, and the confirmation of the letter of Phruræ. ³¹ And Mardocheaus and Esther the queen appointed *a fast* for themselves privately, even at that time also having formed their plan against their own health. ³² And Esther established it by a command for ever, and it was written for a memorial.

10

¹ And the king levied *a tax* upon *his* kingdom both by land and sea. ² And *as 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. ³ And Mardocheaus * was viceroy to king Artaxerxes, and

† 9:24 Gr. lot. * 10:3 Gr. succeeded to Or, came into the place of.

was a great man in the kingdom, and honored by the Jews, and passed his life beloved of all his nation. † [And Mardocheus said, These things have been done of God. For I remember the dream which I had concerning these matters: for not one particular of them has failed. *There was the little fountain 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. And the two serpents are I and Aman. And the nations are those nations that combined to destroy the name of the Jews. But as for my nation, this is Israel, even they that cried to God and were delivered: for the Lord delivered his people. And the Lord rescued us out of all these calamities; and God wrought such signs and great wonders as have not been done among the nations. Therefore did he ordain two lots. One for the people of God, and one for all the other nations. And these two lots came for an appointed season, and for a day of judgment, before God, and for all the nations. And God remembered his people, and vindicated his inheritance. And they shall observe these days in the month Adar, on the fourteenth and on the fifteenth day of the month, with an assembly, and joy and gladness before God, throughout the generations for ever among his people Israel. In 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 epistle of Phurim, which they said was the same, and that Lysimachus the son of Ptolemeus, that was in Jerusalem, had interpreted.]*

† 10:3 the passages in brackets are not in the Hebrew.

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Translation by:

Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton

Michael Paul Johnson

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