Esther

1 This happened in the days of Ahasuerus, the
Ahasuerus who ruled over 127 provinces from
India to Cush.
2 In those days, when King Ahasuerus sat on
his royal throne in the citadel of Susa,
3 in the third year of his reign, he held a
banquet for all his officials and servants. The
forces of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the
officials of the provinces were before him,
4 while he displayed the riches of his glorious
kingdom and the splendor of his majestic
greatness for many days—180 days.
5 When those days were over, the king held a
banquet for seven days for all the people
present in the citadel of Susa, great and small, in
the garden courtyard of the royal palace.
6 White cotton and blue hangings were
fastened with cords of fine linen and purple
cloth to silver rings and marble columns. Gold
and silver couches stood on a pavement of
porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl, and other
costly stone.
7 Drinks were served in gold cups, each
different from the others. There was royal wine
in abundance, according to the king's generosity.
8 The rule for drinking was that no one was
compelled, for the king had instructed all the
stewards of his household to do as each man
wished.

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

10 On the seventh day, when the king's heart
was merry with wine, he commanded
Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha,
Zethar, and Carcas, the seven eunuchs who
served in the presence of King Ahasuerus,
11 to bring Queen Vashti before the king
wearing the royal crown, to show the peoples
and officials her beauty, for she was beautiful to
look at.
12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the
king's command delivered through the eunuchs.
The king became furious, and his anger burned
within him.
13 The king consulted the wise men who
understood the times, for it was his custom to
bring his affairs before all who knew law and
judgment.
14 Those closest to him were Carshena,
Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena,
and Memucan, the seven officials of Persia and
Media who had access to the king's presence
and held the highest seats in the kingdom.
15 “According to the law,” he asked, “what
should be done to Queen Vashti for not carrying
out the command of King Ahasuerus delivered
through the eunuchs?”

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

17 For word of the queen's conduct will spread
to all the women, leading them to despise their
husbands in their own eyes, as they say, 'King
Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be
brought before him, but she did not come.'
18 This very day the noblewomen of Persia and
Media who have heard of the queen's conduct
will say the same to all the king's officials. There
will be contempt and anger in plenty.
19 If it pleases the king, let a royal decree go
out from him, and let it be written among the
laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be
revoked: Vashti must never again come before
King Ahasuerus, and the king should give her
royal position to another woman who is better
than she.
20 When the king's decree is heard throughout
his kingdom, vast as it is, all the wives will give
honor to their husbands, great and small."
21 The proposal pleased the king and the
officials, and the king did as Memucan had said.
22 He sent letters to all the king's provinces, to
each province in its own script and to each
people in its own language, so that every man
would rule in his own house and speak the
language of his own people.

2

1 After these things, when King Ahasuerus's
anger had subsided, he remembered Vashti,
what she had done, and what had been decreed
against her.

2 Then the king's young attendants who served
him said, “Let beautiful young virgins be sought
for the king.
3 Let the king appoint overseers in all the
provinces of his kingdom to gather all the
beautiful young virgins to the citadel of Susa, to
the women's quarters, under the care of Hege,
the king's eunuch who keeps the women. Let
them be given their beauty treatments.
4 Then let the young woman who pleases the
king become queen in place of Vashti.” The
proposal pleased the king, and he did so.

5 There was a Jew in the citadel of Susa named
Mordecai son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish,
a Benjaminite,
6 who had been exiled from Jerusalem with
the exiles deported with Jeconiah king of Judah,
whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had
carried away.
7 He was raising Hadassah, that is, Esther, his
uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor
mother. The young woman had a beautiful
figure and was lovely to look at. When her
father and mother died, Mordecai had taken her
as his own daughter.
8 When the king's command and decree
became known and many young women were
gathered to the citadel of Susa under Hegai's
care, Esther too was taken to the king's house,
into the care of Hegai, the keeper of the women.
9 The young woman pleased him and won his
favor. He quickly provided her beauty

treatments and food portions, along with the seven attendants chosen for her from the king's house. He moved her and her attendants to the best place in the women's quarters.

10 Esther had not made known her people or her family background, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make them known.

11 Every day Mordecai walked in front of the courtyard of the women's quarters to learn how Esther was and what was happening to her.

12 Each young woman's turn to go to King Ahasuerus came after she had completed twelve months under the regulations for the women. This was the full course of their beauty treatments: six months with oil of myrrh and six months with perfumes and women's cosmetics.

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

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

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

16 Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus in his
royal palace in the tenth month, the month of
Tevet, in the seventh year of his reign.
17 The king loved Esther more than all the
other women, and she won his grace and favor
more than all the other virgins. He placed the
royal crown on her head and made her queen in
place of Vashti.
18 Then the king held a great banquet for all
his officials and servants—Esther's banquet. He
granted relief to the provinces and gave gifts
with royal generosity.
19 When the virgins were gathered a second
time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.
20 Esther was not making known her family
background or her people, as Mordecai had
commanded her. She continued to obey
Mordecai's instructions as she had when he was
raising her.

21 In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at
the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the
king's eunuchs who guarded the entrance,
became angry and plotted to lay hands on King
Ahasuerus.
22 Mordecai learned of the matter and told
Queen Esther, and Esther reported it to the king
in Mordecai's name.
23 The matter was investigated and found to
be true, and both men were hanged on a
wooden stake. It was written in the book of the
chronicles in the king's presence.

3

1 After these things, King Ahasuerus promoted
Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite. He
exalted him and set his seat above all the
officials who were with him.
2 All the king's servants at the king's gate
would kneel and bow down to Haman, for the
king had so commanded concerning him. But
Mordecai would neither kneel nor bow down.
3 The king's servants at the king's gate said to
Mordecai, “Why are you disobeying the king's
command?”
4 They spoke to him day after day, but he
would not listen to them. So they told Haman, to
see whether Mordecai's words would stand, for
he had told them that he was a Jew.
5 When Haman saw that Mordecai would
neither kneel nor bow down to him, Haman was
filled with rage.
6 He considered it beneath him to lay hands on
Mordecai alone, for they had told him which
people Mordecai belonged to. So Haman sought
to destroy all the Jews throughout the kingdom
of Ahasuerus, the people of Mordecai.
7 In the first month, the month of Nisan, in the
twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, Pur—that is, the
lot—was cast before Haman for each day and
each month. It fell on the twelfth month, the
month of Adar.
8 Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is a
certain people scattered and dispersed among
the peoples in all the provinces of your
kingdom. Their laws are different from those of
every other people, and they do not keep the

king's laws. It is not in the king's interest to leave them alone.
9 If it pleases the king, let their destruction be decreed, and I will weigh out about 375 tons of silver into the hands of those in charge of the work, to bring into the king's treasuries."
10 The king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.
11 The king said to Haman, "The silver is given to you, and the people as well, to do with them as you see fit."
12 The king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month. Everything Haman commanded was written to the king's satraps, to the governors over each province, and to the leaders of each people, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.
13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jews, young and old, children and women, in a single day—the thirteenth of the twelfth month, the month of Adar—and to plunder their goods.
14 A copy of the document was to be issued as law in every province and made public to all the peoples, so that they would be ready for that day.
15 The couriers went out in haste at the king's command, and the decree was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, while the city of Susa was bewildered.

4

1 When Mordecai learned all that had been
done, Mordecai tore his clothes, put on sackcloth
and ashes, and went out into the middle of the
city, crying out with a loud and bitter cry.
2 He came as far as the front of the king's gate,
for no one could enter the king's gate wearing
sackcloth.
3 In every province, wherever the king's
command and decree reached, there was great
mourning among the Jews, with fasting,
weeping, and lamenting. Sackcloth and ashes
were spread out as bedding for many.
4 Esther's attendants and eunuchs came and
told her, and the queen was deeply distressed.
She sent clothes for Mordecai to put on in place
of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them.
5 Esther called Hathach, one of the king's
eunuchs whom he had appointed to serve her,
and sent him to find out from Mordecai what
this meant and why it was happening.
6 Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city
square in front of the king's gate.
7 Mordecai told him everything that had
happened to him, including the exact amount of
silver Haman had promised to weigh out for the
king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.
8 He also gave him a copy of the written
decree issued in Susa for their destruction, to
show Esther and explain it to her, and to
command her to go to the king to plead with
him and appeal to him for her people.
9 Hathach came back and reported Mordecai's

words to Esther.
10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and
instructed him to tell Mordecai:
11 “All the king's servants and the people of the
king's provinces know that any man or woman
who enters the king's inner courtyard without
being summoned is subject to one law: death.
Only the one to whom the king holds out the
gold scepter may live. And I have not been
summoned to go to the king for thirty days.”
12 They reported Esther's words to Mordecai.
13 Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: “Do not
imagine that you alone of all the Jews will
escape because you are in the king's house.
14 For if you remain completely silent at this
time, relief and deliverance will arise for the
Jews from another place, but you and your
father's house will perish. And who knows
whether you have come to your royal position
for such a time as this?”
15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai:
16 “Go, gather all the Jews who are in Susa and
fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days,
night and day. My attendants and I will fast in
the same way. Then I will go to the king, though
it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”
17 So Mordecai went away and did everything
Esther had commanded him.

5

1 On the third day, Esther put on her royal
robes and stood in the inner courtyard of the
king's house, opposite the royal hall. The king

was sitting on his royal throne in the royal hall,
facing its entrance.
2 When the king saw Queen Esther standing in
the courtyard, she found favor in his eyes. The
king held out to Esther the gold scepter in his
hand, and Esther approached and touched the
tip of the scepter.

3 The king said to her, “What is it, Queen
Esther? What is your request? Even up to half
the kingdom will be given to you.”
4 Esther said, “If it pleases the king, let the king
and Haman come today to the banquet I have
prepared for the king.”
5 The king said, “Have Haman hurry here to do
as Esther has said.” So the king and Haman
came to the banquet Esther had prepared.
6 As they drank wine, the king said to Esther,
“What is your petition? It will be granted you.
And what is your request? Even up to half the
kingdom, it will be done.”
7 Esther answered, “My petition and my
request are these:
8 if I have found favor in the king's eyes, and if
it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill
my request, let the king and Haman come to the
banquet I will prepare for them. Tomorrow I
will do as the king has said.”
9 Haman went out that day joyful and glad of
heart. But when Haman saw Mordecai at the
king's gate, and that he neither rose nor
trembled before him, Haman was filled with
rage against Mordecai.

10 Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself
and went home. He sent for his friends and his
wife Zeresh.
11 Haman told them of the splendor of his
riches, his many sons, all the ways the king had
promoted him, and how he had exalted him
above the king's officials and servants.
12 Haman added, “Queen Esther brought no
one but me with the king to the banquet she
prepared. And tomorrow I am invited by her
again with the king.
13 Yet all this means nothing to me whenever I
see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.”
14 His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to
him, “Have a wooden stake made, about
seventy-five feet high, and in the morning tell
the king to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go
joyfully with the king to the banquet.” The
proposal pleased Haman, and he had the stake
made.

6

1 That night sleep fled from the king. He
ordered the book of records, the chronicles, to
be brought, and they were read before the king.
2 It was found written that Mordecai had
reported about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the
king's eunuchs who guarded the entrance and
had plotted to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.
3 The king asked, “What honor and distinction
have been given to Mordecai for this?” The
king's young attendants who served him replied,
“Nothing has been done for him.”

4 The king said, “Who is in the courtyard?”
Now Haman had come into the outer courtyard
of the king's house to speak to the king about
having Mordecai hanged on the stake he had
prepared for him.
5 The king's attendants said to him, “Haman is
standing in the courtyard.” The king said, “Let
him come in.”
6 Haman came in, and the king said to him,
“What should be done for the man whom the
king delights to honor?” Haman said in his
heart, “Whom would the king delight to honor
more than me?”
7 So Haman said to the king, “For the man
whom the king delights to honor,
8 let a royal robe the king has worn be
brought, and a horse the king has ridden, with a
royal crown placed on its head.
9 Let the robe and the horse be entrusted to
one of the king's most noble officials. Let them
dress the man whom the king delights to honor
and lead him on the horse through the city
square, proclaiming before him, ‘This is what is
done for the man whom the king delights to
honor!’ ”
10 The king said to Haman, “Hurry! Take the
robe and the horse, as you have said, and do so
for Mordecai the Jew who sits at the king's gate.
Leave out nothing of all you have said.”
11 So Haman took the robe and the horse,
dressed Mordecai, and led him on horseback
through the city square, proclaiming before him,
“This is what is done for the man whom the king
delights to honor!”

12 Mordecai returned to the king's gate, but
Haman hurried home, mourning and with his
head covered.
13 Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his
friends everything that had happened to him.
His wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, “If
Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall,
is of Jewish descent, you cannot prevail against
him, but you will surely fall before him.”
14 While they were still speaking with him, the
king's eunuchs arrived and hurried to bring
Haman to the banquet Esther had prepared.

7

1 The king and Haman came to drink with
Queen Esther.
2 On this second day, as they drank wine, the
king again said to Esther, “What is your petition,
Queen Esther? It will be granted you. And what
is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it
will be done.”
3 Queen Esther answered, “If I have found
favor in your eyes, O king, and if it pleases the
king, let my life be given me at my petition, and
my people at my request.
4 For we have been sold, I and my people, to
be destroyed, killed, and annihilated. If we had
been sold as male and female slaves, I would
have remained silent, for the adversary cannot
compensate for the king's loss.”
5 King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen
Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who has
dared in his heart to do this?”

6 Esther said, “The adversary and enemy is this
wicked Haman!” Haman was terrified before the
king and queen.
7 The king rose in anger from the wine
banquet and went into the palace garden.
Haman stood up to beg Queen Esther for his life,
for he saw that the king had determined disaster
against him.
8 The king returned from the palace garden to
the wine banquet hall, and Haman had fallen on
the couch where Esther was. The king said, “Will
he even rape the queen while I am here in the
house?” As soon as these words left the king's
mouth, they covered Haman's face.
9 Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs before
the king, said, “There is also the stake Haman
made for Mordecai, who spoke in the king's
favor. It is standing at Haman's house, about
seventy-five feet high.” The king said, “Hang him
on it!”
10 So they hanged Haman on the stake he had
prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's anger
subsided.

8

1 That day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther
the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews.
Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had
told him how Mordecai was related to her.
2 The king took off his signet ring, which he
had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai.
Esther put Mordecai in charge of Haman's
house.

3 Esther spoke again before the king. She fell
at his feet, wept, and pleaded with him to avert
the evil of Haman the Agagite and the scheme
he had devised against the Jews.
4 The king held out the gold scepter to Esther,
and Esther rose and stood before the king.
5 She said, “If it pleases the king, if I have
found favor before him, if the matter seems
right to the king, and if I am pleasing in his eyes,
let an order be written to revoke the letters
devised by Haman son of Hammedatha the
Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews in
all the king's provinces.
6 For how can I bear to see the disaster that
will come upon my people? And how can I bear
to see the destruction of my family?”
7 King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and
Mordecai the Jew, “I have given Esther Haman's
house, and they have hanged him on the stake
because he laid hands on the Jews.
8 Now you may write concerning the Jews as
you see fit, in the king's name, and seal it with
the king's signet ring. For a document written in
the king's name and sealed with the king's signet
ring cannot be revoked.”
9 The king's scribes were summoned at that
time, on the twenty-third day of the third
month, the month of Sivan. Everything
Mordecai commanded was written to the Jews,
the satraps, the governors, and the officials of
the provinces from India to Cush—127
provinces—to each province in its own script
and to each people in its own language, and to

the Jews in their own script and language.
10 He wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus
and sealed it with the king's signet ring. He sent
letters by couriers on horseback, riding royal
steeds born of mares.
11 The king granted the Jews in every city the
right to assemble and defend their lives, to
destroy, kill, and annihilate any force of a people
or province that attacked them, including
children and women, and to plunder their
goods,
12 on a single day in all the provinces of King
Ahasuerus—the thirteenth of the twelfth month,
the month of Adar.
13 A copy of the document was to be issued as
law in every province and made public to all the
peoples, so that the Jews would be ready for that
day to avenge themselves on their enemies.
14 The couriers mounted on royal steeds went
out urgently and in haste at the king's command,
and the decree was issued in the citadel of Susa.
15 Mordecai went out from the king's presence
in royal robes of blue and white, with a large
gold crown and a cloak of fine linen and purple.
The city of Susa shouted for joy and rejoiced.
16 For the Jews there was light, gladness, joy,
and honor.
17 In every province and every city, wherever
the king's command and decree reached, there
was gladness and joy for the Jews, feasting and a
holiday. Many from the peoples of the land
became Jews, because fear of the Jews had fallen
upon them.

9

1 On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month,
the month of Adar, when the king's command
and decree were to be carried out, on the day
when the enemies of the Jews hoped to
overpower them, the reverse happened: the
Jews themselves overpowered those who hated
them.
2 The Jews assembled in their towns
throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus
to lay hands on those who sought their harm.
No one could stand against them, for fear of
them had fallen on all the peoples.
3 All the officials of the provinces, the satraps,
the governors, and those who did the king's
work supported the Jews, because fear of
Mordecai had fallen upon them.
4 For Mordecai was great in the king's house,
and his fame spread throughout all the
provinces, for the man Mordecai was growing
greater and greater.

5 The Jews struck all their enemies with the
sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did
as they pleased to those who hated them.
6 In the citadel of Susa the Jews killed and
destroyed five hundred men.
7 Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,
8 Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,
9 Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha—
10 they killed these ten sons of Haman son of
Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. But they
did not lay hands on the plunder.

11 That day the number of those killed in the
citadel of Susa was reported to the king.
12 The king said to Queen Esther, “In the citadel
of Susa the Jews have killed and destroyed five
hundred men and Haman's ten sons. What have
they done in the rest of the king's provinces?
What is your petition? It will be granted you.
What further request do you have? It will be
done.”
13 Esther said, “If it pleases the king, let the
Jews in Susa be granted permission to act
tomorrow also according to today's decree, and
let Haman's ten sons be hung on the stake.”
14 The king ordered this to be done. A decree
was issued in Susa, and they hung Haman's ten
sons.
15 The Jews in Susa assembled also on the
fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed
three hundred men in Susa. But they did not lay
hands on the plunder.
16 The rest of the Jews in the king's provinces
assembled, defended their lives, and gained rest
from their enemies. They killed 75,000 of those
who hated them. But they did not lay hands on
the plunder.
17 This was on the thirteenth day of the month
of Adar. They rested on the fourteenth and made
it a day of feasting and gladness.
18 But the Jews in Susa assembled on the
thirteenth and fourteenth of the month. They
rested on the fifteenth and made it a day of
feasting and gladness.
19 That is why the Jews of the countryside,

who live in unwalled towns, observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a day of gladness and feasting, a holiday when they send portions of food to one another.

20 Mordecai wrote down these things and sent letters to all the Jews in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, near and far,
21 requiring them to observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and the fifteenth day every year,
22 as the days when the Jews gained rest from their enemies, and the month when their sorrow turned to gladness and their mourning to a holiday. They were to make these days of feasting and gladness, sending portions of food to one another and gifts to the poor.
23 The Jews accepted what they had begun to do and what Mordecai had written to them.
24 For Haman 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 terrify and destroy them.
25 But when Esther came before the king, he ordered in writing that the evil scheme Haman had devised against the Jews should return upon his own head. They hung him and his sons on the stake.
26 That is why they called these days Purim, after the word Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, what they had seen in this matter, and what had happened to them,
27 the Jews established and accepted the obligation for themselves, their descendants,

and all who joined them to observe these two days without fail every year, as prescribed in writing and at their appointed time.
28 These days were to be remembered and observed in every generation, every family, every province, and every city. These days of Purim were not to pass away from among the Jews, nor their remembrance cease among their descendants.
29 Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim.
30 He sent letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,
31 to confirm these days of Purim at their appointed times, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had established for them, and as they had established for themselves and their descendants the matters of their fasts and their cry.
32 Esther's command confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.

10

1 King Ahasuerus imposed tribute on the land and the islands of the sea.
2 All the acts of his power and might, and the detailed account of the greatness of Mordecai, whom the king had exalted—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?
3 For Mordecai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus, great among the Jews and esteemed

by many of his brothers. He sought the good of his people and spoke for the peace of all his descendants.

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