**Esther**

Chapter 1

**The King Makes a Feast**

Now it happened in the days of Ahasuerus (this is Ahasuerus who reigned from India even to Ethiopia, over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces), 2that in those days, when the King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom which was in Shushan the palace, 3in the third year of his reign, he made a feast for all his princes and his servants; the powerful ones of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him. 4He displayed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even one hundred and eighty days. 5When those days were fulfilled, the king made a seven day feast for all the people who were present in Shushan the palace, both great and small, in the court of the garden of the king’s palace. 6There were hangings of white, green and blue material, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and marble pillars. The couches were of gold and silver, on a pavement of red, white, yellow and black marble. 7They gave them ample drinks in golden vessels of various kinds, including the wine of the kingdom, according to the bounty of the king. 8In accordance with the law, the drinking was not compulsory; for so the king had instructed all the officials of his house, that they should do according to every man’s pleasure. 9Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to King Ahasuerus.

**Queen Vashti Disobeys the King**

10On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carcass, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, 11to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the royal crown, to show the people and the princes her beauty; for she was beautiful. 12But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king’s commandment by the eunuchs. Therefore the king was very angry, and his anger burned in him. 13Then the king said to the wise men who knew the times, (for it was the king’s custom to consult those who knew law and judgement; 14and those next to him were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who saw the king’s face, and sat first in the kingdom), 15What shall we do to the queen Vashti according to law, because she has not done the bidding of the King Ahasuerus by the eunuchs? 16Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen has not done wrong to only the king, but also to all the princes, and to all the people who are in all the provinces of the King Ahasuerus. 17For this deed of the queen will become known to all women, causing them to show contempt for their husbands when it is reported, ‘King Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she didn’t come.’ 18Today, the princesses of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen’s deed will likewise tell all the king’s princes. This will cause much contempt and wrath.

**The King's Decree**

19If it please the king, let a royal commandment go from him and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it cannot be altered, that Vashti may never again come before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate to another who is better than she. 20When the king’s decree which he shall make is published throughout all his kingdom (for it is great), all the wives will give their husbands honour, both great and small. 21This advice pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan: 22for he sent letters into all the king’s provinces, into every province according to its writing, and to every people in their language, that every man should rule his own house, and that it should be published in the language of each people.

Chapter 2

**The King Seeks a New Queen**

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

**Mordecai and Esther**

5There was a certain Jew in the citadel of Susa, whose name was Mordecai, son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish a Benjamite, 6who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. 7He brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter; for she had neither father nor mother. The maiden was fair and beautiful; and when her father and mother were dead, Mordecai took her for his own daughter. 8So it happened that when the king’s commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together to the citadel of Susa, to the custody of Hegai, Esther was taken into the king’s house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. 9The maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness from him. He quickly gave her cosmetics and her portions of food, and the seven choice maidens who were to be given her out of the king’s house. He moved her and her maidens to the best place in the women’s house. 10Esther had not made known her people nor her relatives, because Mordecai had instructed her that she should not make it known. 11Mordecai walked every day in front of the court of the women’s house, to find out how Esther was doing, and what would become of her.

**Esther is Made Queen**

12Each young woman’s turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after her purification for twelve months (for so were the days of their purification accomplished, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet fragrances and with preparations for beautifying women). 13The young woman then came to the king like this: whatever she desired was given her to go with her out of the women’s house to the king’s house. 14In the evening she went, and on the next day she returned into the second women’s house, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king’s eunuch, who kept the concubines. She came in to the king no more, unless the king delighted in her, and she was called by name. 15Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, came to go in to the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king’s eunuch, the keeper of the women, advised. Esther obtained favour in the sight of all those who looked at her. 16So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus into his royal house in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. 17The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she obtained favour and kindness in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown on her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. 18Then the king made a great feast for all his princes and his servants, even Esther’s feast; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces, and gave gifts according to the king’s bounty.

**Mordecai Saves the King's Life**

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

Chapter 3

**Haman Seeks to Destroy the Jews**

After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes who were with him. 2All the king’s servants who were in the king’s gate bowed down, and paid homage to Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai didn’t bow down or pay him homage. 3Then the king’s servants who were in the king’s gate said to Mordecai, Why do you disobey the king’s commandment? 4Now it came to pass, when they spoke daily to him and he didn’t listen to them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai’s position would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew. 5When Haman saw that Mordecai didn’t bow down nor pay him homage, Haman was full of wrath. 6But he scorned the thought of laying hands on Mordecai alone, for they had made known to him Mordecai’s people. Therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even Mordecai’s people. 7In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, and chose the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. 8Haman said to King Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom, and their laws are different from other people’s. They don’t keep the king’s laws. Therefore it is not for the king’s profit to allow them to remain. 9If it pleases the king, let it be written that they be destroyed; and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who are in charge of the king’s business, to bring it into the king’s treasuries.

**The Decree to Destroy the Jews**

10The king took his ring from his hand, and gave it to Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews’ enemy. 11The king said to Haman, The silver is given to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you. 12Then the king’s scribes were called in on the first month, on the thirteenth day of the month; and all that Haman commanded was written to the king’s satraps and to the governors who were over every province, and to the princes of every people, to every province according to its writing, and to every people in their language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus, and it was sealed with the king’s ring. 13Letters were sent by couriers into all the king’s provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to plunder their possessions. 14A copy of the letter, that the decree should be given out in every province, was published to all the peoples, that they should be prepared against that day. 15The couriers went forth in haste by the king’s commandment, and the decree was given out in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

Chapter 4

**Mordecai Wants Esther to Know of the King's Decree**

Now when Mordecai found out all that was done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and wailed loudly and a bitterly. 2He came even before the king’s gate; for no one was allowed inside the king’s gate clothed with sackcloth. 3In every province, wherever the king’s commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. 4Esther’s maidens and her eunuchs came and told her this, and the queen was exceedingly grieved. She sent clothing to Mordecai, to replace his sackcloth; but he didn’t receive it. 5Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs, whom he had appointed to attend her, and commanded him to go to Mordecai, to find out what this was, and why it was. 6So Hathach went out to Mordecai, to the city square which was before the king’s gate. 7Mordecai told him of all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king’s treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. 8He also gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given out in Shushan to destroy them, to show it to Esther, and to declare it to her, and to urge her to go in to the king to make supplication to him, to make request before him for her people.

**Messages Between Mordecai and Esther**

9Hathach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai. 10Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message to Mordecai: 11All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that whoever, whether man or woman, comes to the king into the inner court without being invited, there is one law for him, that he be put to death; except those to whom the king might hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live. I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days. 12They told to Mordecai Esther’s words. 13Then Mordecai asked them to return answer to Esther, Don’t think to yourself that you will escape in the king’s house any more than all the Jews. 14For if you remain silent now, then relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Who knows if you haven’t come to the kingdom for such a time as this? 15Then Esther asked them to answer Mordecai, 16Go, gather together all the Jews who are present in Shushan and fast for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I and my maidens will also fast the same way. Then I will go in to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish. 17So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

Chapter 5

**Esther Invites the King and Haman to a Banquet**

Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal clothing, and stood in the inner court of the king’s house, next to the king’s house. The king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, next to the entrance of the house. 2When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favour in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther came near, and touched the top of the sceptre. 3Then the king asked her, What would you like, queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you even to the half of the kingdom. 4Esther said, If it seems good to the king, let the king come with Haman today to the banquet that I have prepared for him. 5Then the king said, Bring Haman quickly, so that it may be done as Esther has said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. 6The king said to Esther at the banquet of wine, What is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed. 7Then Esther answered and said, My petition and my request is this. 8If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I will prepare for them, and I will do tomorrow as the king has said.

**Haman Plots to Have Mordecai Hanged**

9Then Haman went out that day joyful and glad of heart, but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king’s gate, that he didn’t stand up nor move for him, he was filled with wrath against Mordecai. 10Nevertheless Haman restrained himself, and went home. There, he sent and called for his friends and Zeresh his wife. 11Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches, the multitude of his children, all the things in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. 12Haman also said, Yes, Esther the queen let no man come in with the king to the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and tomorrow I am also invited by her together with the king. 13Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate. 14Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, Let a gallows be made fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on it. Then go in merrily with the king to the banquet. This pleased Haman, so he had the gallows made.

Chapter 6

**The King Remembers Mordecai**

On that night, sleep fled from the king. He commanded the book of records of the chronicles to be brought, and they were read to the king. 2It was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s eunuchs, who were doorkeepers, who had tried to lay hands on the King Ahasuerus. 3The king said, What honour and dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this? Then the king’s servants who attended him said, Nothing has been done for him. 4The king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman had come into the outer court of the king’s house, to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. 5The king’s servants said to him, Behold, Haman stands in the court. The king said, Let him come in. 6So Haman came in. The king said to him, What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honour? Now Haman said in his heart, Who would the king delight to honour more than myself? 7Haman said to the king, For the man whom the king delights to honour, 8let royal clothing be brought which the king wears, and the horse that the king rides on, and on the head of which a crown royal is set. 9Let the clothing and the horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that they may array the man whom the king delights to honour with them, and have him ride on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, ‘Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honour!’

**Mordecai is Honoured But Haman Mourns**

10Then the king said to Haman, Hurry and take the clothing and the horse, as you have said, and do this for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king’s gate. Let nothing fail of all that you have spoken. 11Then Haman took the clothing and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and had him ride through the city square, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honour! 12Mordecai came back to the king’s gate, but Haman hurried to his house, mourning and having his head covered. 13Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him, but you will surely fall before him. 14While they were yet talking with him, the king’s eunuchs came, and hurried to bring Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Chapter 7

**Esther Reveals Haman's Plot to the King**

So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. 2The king said again to Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is your petition, queen Esther? It shall be granted you. What is your request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed. 3Then Esther the queen answered, If I have found favour in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. 4For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondservants and bondmaids, I would have held my peace, although the adversary could not have compensated for the king’s loss. 5Then King Ahasuerus said to Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he who dared presume in his heart to do so? 6Esther said, The adversary and the enemy is even this wicked Haman!

**Haman Put to Death**

Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. 7The king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden. Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. 8Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman had fallen on the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, Will he even assault the queen in front of me in the house? As the word went out of the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face. 9Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs who were with the king said, Behold, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman has made for Mordecai, who spoke good for the king, is standing at Haman’s house. The king said, Hang him on it! 10So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king’s wrath pacified.

Chapter 8

**Esther Pleads for Her People**

On that day, King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the Jews’ enemy, to Esther the queen. Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was to her. 2The king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman. 3Esther spoke yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and begged him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews. 4Then the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre. So Esther arose, and stood before the king. 5She said, If it pleases the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right to the king, and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king’s provinces. 6For how can I endure to see the evil that would come to my people? How can I endure to see the destruction of my relatives?

**The King Grants Esther's Wish**

7Then King Ahasuerus said to Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, If I have freely granted you all that was Haman's, because he laid his hand on the Jews, and hanged him on a gallows, what do you further seek? 8Write also to the Jews, as it pleases you, in the king’s name, and seal it with the king’s ring; for the writing which is written in the king’s name, and sealed with the king’s ring, may not be reversed by any man. 9Then the king’s scribes were called at that time, in the third month Sivan, on the twenty-third day of the first month, which is Nisan; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded to the Jews, and to the satraps, the governors and princes of the provinces which are from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, to every province according to its writing, and to every people in their language, and to the Jews in their writing and in their language. 10He wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king’s ring, and sent letters by courier on horseback, riding on royal horses that were bred from swift steeds.

**The Jews Are to Defend Themselves**

11In those letters, the king granted the Jews who were in every city to gather themselves together, and to defend their life, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all the power of the people and province that would assault them, their little ones and women, and to plunder their possessions, 12on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. 13A copy of the letter, that the decree should be given out in every province, was published to all the peoples, that the Jews should be ready for that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. 14So the couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king’s commandment. The decree was given out in the citadel of Susa. 15Mordecai went out of the presence of the king in royal clothing of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a robe of fine linen and purple; and the city of Susa shouted and was glad. 16The Jews had light, gladness, joy, and honour. 17In every province, and in every city, wherever the king’s commandment and his decree came, the Jews had gladness, joy, a feast, and a good day. Many from among the peoples of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews was fallen on them.

Chapter 9

**The Jews Destroy Their Enemies**

Now in the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the month, when the king’s commandment and his decree drew near to be put into effect, on the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to conquer them, (but it was turned about so that the opposite happened- the Jews conquered those who hated them), 2the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the King Ahasuerus, to lay hands on those who wanted to harm them. No one could withstand them, because the fear of them had fallen on all the people. 3All the princes of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and those who did the king’s business helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai had fallen on them. 4For Mordecai was great in the king’s house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces; for the man Mordecai grew greater and greater. 5The Jews struck all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and with slaughter and destruction, and did what they wanted to those who hated them. 6In the citadel of Susa, the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. 7They killed Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, 8Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, 9Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizatha, 10the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Jew’s enemy; but they didn’t lay their hand on the plunder. 11On that day, the number of those who were slain in the citadel of Susa was brought before the king. 12The king said to Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in the citadel of Susa, including the ten sons of Haman; what then have they done in the rest of the king’s provinces! Now what is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your further request? It shall be done. 13Then Esther said, If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to do tomorrow also according to this day’s decree, and let Haman’s ten sons be hanged on the gallows. 14The king commanded this to be done. A decree was given out in Shushan; and they hanged Haman’s ten sons. 15The Jews who were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and killed three hundred men in Shushan; but they didn’t lay their hand on the spoil. 16The other Jews who were in the king’s provinces gathered themselves together, defended their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of those who hated them; but they didn’t lay their hand on the plunder.

**The Custom of Purim Begins**

17This was done on the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and on the fourteenth day of that month they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness. 18But the Jews who were in Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth and on the fourteenth days of the month; and on the fifteenth day of that month, they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. 19Therefore the Jews of the villages, who lived in the unwalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, a good day, and a day of sending presents of food to one another. 20Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both near and far, 21to enjoin them that they should keep the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar yearly, 22as the days in which the Jews had rest from their enemies, and the month which was turned to them from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending presents of food to one another, and gifts to the needy. 23The Jews accepted the custom that they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them; 24because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them; 25but when this became known to the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he had devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. 26Therefore they called these days Purim, from the word ‘Pur’. Therefore because of all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and that which had come to them, 27the Jews established and imposed on themselves and on their descendants, and on all those who joined themselves to them, so that it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to what was written, and according to its appointed time, every year; 28and that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor their memory perish from their seed. 29Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority to confirm this second letter of Purim. 30He sent letters to all the Jews, to the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth, 31to confirm these days of Purim in their appointed times, as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had decreed, and as they had imposed upon themselves and their descendants, in the matter of the fastings and their cry. 32The commandment of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

Chapter 10

**The Greatness of King Ahasuerus and Mordecai**

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