

## Esther Invites Ahasuerus and Haman to a Banquet (June 24, 474 BC)

### Esther 5

1 And it happened, on the third day, and Esther put on royal clothes, and she stood in the inner courtyard of the king's palace, opposite the king's palace; the king *was* sitting on his royal throne in the throne room opposite the doorway of the palace.

2 When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the courtyard she found favor in his eyes, and the king held out the gold scepter that *was* in his hand to Esther, and Esther approached and touched the top of the scepter.

3 And the king said to her, "What *is* it, Queen Esther? What *is* your request? It will be given to you—even half the kingdom."

4 And Esther said, "If it is good to the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

5 And the king said, "Bring Haman quickly to fulfill the request of Esther." So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6 And the king said to Esther while they were drinking wine, "What *is* your petition? It will be given to you. What *is* your request? Even half the kingdom, it will done.

7 And Esther answered and said, "*This is* my petition and my request.

8 If I have found favor in the eyes of the king, and if it is good to the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I will prepare for them tomorrow, and I will do according to the word of the king.

9 And Haman went out on that day rejoicing and feeling good. But when Haman saw Mordecai at the gate of the king, and he did not rise or tremble before him, Haman was filled with rage toward Mordecai.

10 But Haman controlled himself and went to his house, and he sent *for* and brought his friends and Zeresh his wife.

11 And Haman recounted to them the splendor of his wealth and the number of his sons and all *the ways* that the king had honored him and promoted him above the officials and king's servants.

12 And Haman added, "Esther the Queen did not let *just anyone* come to the banquet that she prepared with the king except me, and I am also invited tomorrow to her *banquet* with the king.

13 But all this fails to satisfy me when I see Mordecai the Jew setting at the gate of the king."

14 And Zeresh his wife and all of his friends said to him, "Let them make a gallows fifty cubits high, and in the morning tell the king, "Let them hang Mordecai on it; then go with the king to the banquet happily." The advice pleased Haman, so he had the gallows made.

## Ahasuerus Orders Haman to Honor Mordecai (June 25, 474 BC)

### Esther 6

1 During that night the king's sleep escaped *him*, and he gave orders to bring the scroll of records and chronicles, and they were read before the king.

2 And it was found written how Mordecai had reported concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs from the keepers of the threshold who had conspired to assassinate King Ahasuerus.

3 And the king asked, "What has been done to bestow honor to Mordecai for this?" And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

4 And the king asked, "Who *is* in the courtyard?" Haman had just come to the courtyard of the king's outer palace to tell the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

5 And the king's servants said to him, "Look! Haman *is* standing in the courtyard." And the king said, "Let him come."

6 And Haman came, and the king said to him, "What *is* to be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor?" And Haman thought to himself, "Whom would the king wish to honor more than me?"

7 So Haman said to the king, "For a man whom the king wishes to honor,

8 let them bring royal clothing with which the king has clothed himself, and a horse that the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal head-dress has been given.

9 And let the clothing and the horse be given to the man by the officials of the king's nobles; let them cloth the man whom the king wishes to honor, and let him ride on his horse through the public square of the city, and let them proclaim before him, "Thus, it will be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor.""

10 Then the king said to Haman, "Quickly, take the clothing and the horse, just as you have said, and do so to Mordecai the Jew who sits at the gate of the king; you must not leave out anything from what you have said."

11 So Haman took the clothing and the horse, and he clothed Mordecai and let him ride through the public square of the city; and he proclaimed before him, "Thus, it is done to the man whom the king wishes to honor."

12 Then Mordecai returned to the gate of the king, and Haman rushed to his house mournful and with his head covered.

13 And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends all that had happened to him. And his advisers and Zeresh his wife said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, *is* from the descendants of the Jews, you will not prevail against him, but will certainly fall before him."

14 As they *were* still speaking with him the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried to bring Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

## A Fateful Banquet (June 25, 474 BC)

Esther 7–8

### Esther's Request

7:1 So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther.

2 And the king again said to Esther, on the second day while they were drinking, "What *is* your petition, Queen Esther? It will be given to you. What *is* your request? It will be given *to you*—even half the kingdom."

3 Then Queen Esther answered, and she said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, O king, and if it is good to the king, let my life be given to me at my petition and my people at my request;

4 I and my people have been sold to be destroyed and killed, to be annihilated. If we had been sold as male and female slaves I would have kept quiet, because this is not a need sufficient to trouble the king."

5 And King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who *is* he, and where *is* he, who gave himself the right to do this?"

6 And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy *is* this evil Haman!" And Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

7 The king rose in his anger from the banquet *and went* to the palace garden, and Haman stood to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he realized that the king was determined to make an end to his life.

### Haman Hanged

8 And the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, *where Haman was* lying prostrate on the couch that Esther *was* on, and the king said, "Will he also molest the queen with me in the house?" As the words went from the king's mouth they covered Haman's face.

9 And Habrona, one of the eunuchs in the presence of the king, said, "Look, the same gallows that Haman had prepared for Mordecai who spoke good *for the sake* of the king stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on it."

10 And they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai, and the anger of the king was abated.

### Esther Rewarded and Mordecai Promoted

8:1 On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews; and Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he *was* to her.

2 And the king removed his signet ring that he had taken away from Haman, and he gave it to Mordecai. So Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

### Esther's Request to Save the Jews

3 And Esther again spoke before the king, and she fell before his feet and wept, pleading for his grace to avert Haman the Agagite's evil *plan* and the plot that he devised against the Jews.

4 And the king held out to Esther the scepter of gold, and Esther rose and stood before the king,

5 and she said, "If it is good to the king, and if I have found favor before him, and if the king is pleased with this matter, and I have his approval, let *an edict* be written to revoke the letters of the plans of Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews that *are* in all the provinces of the king.

6 For how can I bear to look on the disaster that will find my people, and how can I bear to look on the destruction of my family?"

### Ahasuerus Authorizes Esther and Mordecai to Issue a Decree in His Name

7 And King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Look, I have given Haman's house to Esther, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he plotted against the Jews.

8 Write as you see fit concerning the Jews in the name of the king, and seal *it* with the king's signet ring; for a decree that is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's signet ring cannot be revoked."

### Mordecai Decrees that the Jews May Defend Themselves

9 And the secretaries of the king were summoned at that time, in the third month, which *is* in the month of Sivan on the twenty-third *day*, and *an edict* was written according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews and to the governors and satraps and officials of the provinces from India to Cush—one hundred and twenty-seven provinces—each province according to its own script and to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language.

10 And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and he sealed *the letters* with the king's signet ring and sent them by couriers on horses, riding on royal horses bred by racing mares.

11 *In them* the king allowed the Jews who *were* in every city to assemble and defend their lives, to destroy and kill and annihilate any army of any people or province attacking them, including women and children, and to plunder their spoil,

12 in one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

13 A copy of the edict *was* to be given *as law* in each province to inform all the people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves from their enemies.

14 The mounted couriers on the royal horses went out without delay, urged by the king's word. The law was given in the citadel of

Susa.

### The Jews Rejoice

15 Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal clothing of blue cloth and white linen, and a great crown of gold and a robe of fine white linen and purple, and the city of Susa was shouting and rejoicing.

16 For the Jews, there was light and gladness, joy and honor.

17 In every province and city, wherever the king's edict and his law came, there was gladness and joy for the Jews, a banquet and a holiday, and many of the people from the country *were* posing as Jews because the fear of the Jews had fallen on them.

## The Jews Soundly Defeat Their Enemies (April 5–7, 473 BC)

Esther 9:1–19

1 In the twelfth month, that *is* the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, on which the edict of the king arrived and his law was enacted, on the day in which the enemies of the Jews had hoped to gain power over them but was overturned, *and* the Jews gained power against their enemies,

2 the Jews gathered in their cities in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to strike against those who sought their destruction, and no one could withstand them, as the fear of them fell on all the people.

3 All the officials of the provinces, the satraps, governors, and those who did the work of the king *were* supporting the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai had fallen on them.

4 For Mordecai *was* high-ranking in the king's palace and his fame spread throughout all the provinces as Mordecai grew more and more powerful.

5 The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying *them*; and they did as they pleased with those that hated them.

6 And in the citadel of Susa the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men,

7 and Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,

8 Portha, Adalia, Aridatha,

9 Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha,

10 the ten sons of Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews; but they did not touch the plunder.

11 On that day the number of those being killed in the citadel of Susa was reported to the king.

12 And the king said to Queen Esther, "In the citadel of Susa the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? What *is* your petition? It will be granted to you. And what further *is* your request? It will be done."

13 Esther replied, "If it is good to the king, let tomorrow also be granted to the Jews who *are* in Susa to do according to the edict of today; and let them hang Haman's ten sons on the gallows."

14 And the king said to do so. And a decree was issued in Susa and Haman's ten sons were hanged.

15 And the Jews were gathered who *were* in Susa, and on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and they killed in Susa three hundred men, but they did not touch the plunder.

16 The rest of the Jews who *were* in the king's provinces gathered and defended their lives and found repose from their enemies. And they killed seventy-five thousand of those that hated them, but they did not touch the plunder.

17 *This was* on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. *They* rested on the fourteenth *day* and made it a day of feasting and joy.

18 But the Jews who *were* in Susa gathered on the thirteenth and on the fourteenth day, and rested on the fifteenth day. And they made it a day of feasting and joy.

19 Therefore the Jews in the rural *areas*, living in the rural towns, made the fourteenth month of Adar a day of joy and feasting, a festive day of giving gifts to each other.

## The Feast of Purim (April 6–7, 473 BC)

Esther 9:20–32

20 Mordecai wrote down these things and he sent letters to all the Jews who *were* in all *of* the provinces of King Ahasuerus, *both* near and far,

21 to impose on them to keep the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and the fifteenth *day*, every year,

22 as the day that the Jews found relief from their enemies, and the month which changed for them from sorrow to joy, and from a mourning ceremony to a festive day; to make them days of feasting and joy, and giving gifts to each other and to the poor.

23 And the Jews adopted what they had begun to do and what Mordecai had written to them.

24 For Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews had plotted against the Jews to destroy them, and he had cast pur, that *is* the lot, to rout them out and destroy them.

25 But when it came to the attention of the king, he gave orders in writing *that* his evil plot that he had devised against the Jews should return on his head, and they hung him and his sons on the gallows.

26 Therefore they called these days Purim, because of the name Pur. Thus because of all the words of this letter, and of what they faced concerning this, and of what had happened to them,  
27 the Jews established and adopted *it* for themselves and for their offspring, and for all who joined them. They did not neglect to observe these two days every year as it was written and appointed to them.  
28 These days *are* to be remembered and *are* to be kept in every generation, and in family, province, and city; and these days of Purim are not *to be* neglected among the Jews, and their memory shall not come to an end among their offspring.  
29 So Queen Esther the daughter of Abihail and Mordecai the Jew wrote in full authority to confirm this second letter of Purim.  
30 He sent letters of words of peace and truth to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of Ahasuerus' kingdom,  
31 to establish these days of Purim at their appointed times, just as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had imposed, and just as they had imposed on themselves and their offspring regulations of the fast and their lament.  
32 And the command of Esther established these practices of Purim, and *it was* written on the scroll.

### Mordecai Honored (c. 473–465 BC)

#### Esther 10

1 King Ahasuerus imposed forced labor on the land and islands of the sea.  
2 All the work of his authority and his powerful deeds, and the full accounting of the greatness of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, are they not written on the scroll of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?  
3 For Mordecai the Jew *was* second-in-command to King Ahasuerus. *He was* great for the Jews and popular with many of his brothers, for he sought good for his people, interceding for the welfare of all his descendants.

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