

Esther

Esther, after whom this book was written was a Jewish heroine. The name Esther means "star." Esther was the cousin and adopted daughter of Mordecai. She became the Queen of Artaxerxes (*Hebrew: Ahasuerus. LXX: Xerxes*) and delivered her people from the destruction that had been planned by Haman. To commemorate these events the Feast of Purim was instituted and because of this Esther is read in the Synagogue each time the Feast of Purim is celebrated. As the result of this, the book is found not only among the Writings (*the third section of the MT*) but is included as the last of the five scrolls of the Megilloth. In the English Bible it is found between the historical and poetic books.

The author is unknown, but the book was no doubt written during the Maccabean period, possibly ca. 125 B.C.E.¹

In Hebrew the name of God is not mentioned in the book. The Alexandrian Jews who were Greek speaking, established a somewhat different text in the LXX. Not only are these additions known to us as Apocryphal (*or, Deutero-canonical*) additions to Esther, but other differences also occur within the LXX (*Septuagint*). There is an Alpha text which has most of these additions.² The Beta text of the LXX is deemed to be a somewhat later text which is virtually the MT text. The Alpha text has 107 additional verses in six additions that are not found in the Hebrew text. These appear in this translation in bold double brackets: **[[]]**. These portions of the LXX, not found in the Hebrew text, to a degree, provide additional explanatory material which at some points seems to be repetitive. In this translation both the Hebrew and Greek texts were used and compared.

The question arises: Does the LXX report the story more accurately than the abbreviated version in Hebrew? Or: Is the LXX a free translation or a paraphrase? [*At the moment in these studies this seems to be the preferred opinion by scholars.*] Even the Beta text has a much more religious quality than the Hebrew text. Some scholars feel that portions of these additions are the work of Lysimachus, an Alexandrian Jew who lived ca. 114 B.C.E. The remainder seem to have appeared a few years later, either also by Lysimachus or some other person. This provides one of those mysteries that presumably can not be solved.

Jerome (*d. ca. 419 C.E.*) questioned the difference between the Hebrew and LXX versions. The 'additions' were separated from the Jerusalem canon, especially in the Protestant Reformation. These books that were in the Alexandrian canon, but not in the Jerusalem canon, including the additions to Esther, were set apart and placed between the Old Testament and the New Testament in printed Bibles.

1 Information about that period of history is found on The Cyrus Cylinder in the British Museum which contains annals of that history.

2 Cf. Karen H. Jobes [The Alpha Text of Esther](#).

With the division into chapters Stephen Layton numbered the 'additions' consecutively, as if they were an addition or appendix to the Hebrew text. This has caused considerable confusion. In this translation the numbering of the chapters will be both that of Layton as well as "Addition A" for example.

Martin Luther said of Esther, "I am so hostile to the book that I wish it did not exist: for it judges too much and has too much heathen naughtiness." The book appears to be out of sympathy with the teachings of the prophets, for it bristles with hate and revenge.

The Hebrew text begins with the Hebrew word **וַיְהִי** "and it came to pass" which would imply that something preceded these words in the Hebrew text but is now missing. While the LXX has words that precede that first Hebrew word, there is no assurance that these words are original to the Hebrew text since no Hebrew manuscripts cite the 'Addition' of the LXX.

A new translation of the LXX text has been announced but at this point in time it has not yet gone to press.

Esther

[[ADDITION A]]³

<CHAPTER 11>

A Mordecai's premonition 11:2⁴ - 12

[[11² In the second year of the reign of Artaxerxes⁵ the Great, on the first day of the month of Nisan⁶ Mordecai⁷ the son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin⁸ had a premonition (*or, dream*).³ He was an important official, residing in the city of Susa,⁹ who held a high office in the royal court. ⁴ He was one of the captives whom king Nebuchadnezer¹⁰ of Babylon had taken from Jerusalem along with king Jeconiah of Judea.¹¹

This was his dream:

⁵ There were noises (*or, voices*) and clamor¹² (*or, din*);
loud thunder and earthquake; terrible turmoil on the entire earth.
⁶ Then two enormous dragons appeared, poised for combat.
Their roaring was terrible (*or, they started a terrible uproar*).
⁷ At their roaring every nation¹³ prepared for war,
to make war against the just (*or, lawful*) nation.¹⁴
⁸ It was a day of darkness and gloom,
of oppression and persecution;
destruction and great confusion on the earth.
(*or, Here was a day of darkness and gloom,
distress and anxiety, oppression and great confusion on the earth.*)
⁹ The entire righteous nation was dismayed;
greatly terrified of the evils that awaited them.¹⁵
The prepared for death (*or, destruction*),
¹⁰ They cried out to God for help; and at their outcry
it was as though a great river with abundant water
came from a tiny spring. ¹¹ The day dawned, and as the
sun rose, the humble people were made strong
and they destroyed their arrogant enemies.

¹² Mordecai saw in his dream what God had resolved to do. Upon waking he had this on his mind, seeking all day to discover it's meaning (*or, trying in every way to understand it*).

3 The purpose of these additions was to make the story more vivid and to include references to God. Their historical value is questionable.

4 Verse 1 is the conclusion of the Book of Esther as a colophon and will be found there.

5 Artaxerxes reigned from 465 - 424 B.C.E. The LXX mistakenly calls him Xerxes who reigned from 484 - 465 B.C.E. The name Artaxerxes means "great king."

6 Nisan was the first month of the Hebrew calendar, mid-March to mid-April. Nisan means "beginning."

7 LXX: Μαρδοχαιος. The name means "dedicated to Mars."

8 Jair means "be righteous." Shimei means "my renowned." LXX reads: Σεμειου. Kish means "bow." Benjamin means "son of the right hand."

9 Susa was the winter residence of the Persian kings, located about 200 miles N. E. of Babylon, one of four Persian capitals.

10 The name means "Nebo defend the boundary."

11 Jeconiah means "the Lord is able." Judea means "let God be praised."

12 I. e. an uproar, as in a crowd.

13 LXX: εθος in this instance implying the non-Jews.

14 Here εθος is applied to the Jews.

15 LXX: "their own evils."

<CHAPTER 12>

A plot against the king 12:1 - 6

12 ¹ While Mordecai was resting in the courtyard with Gabatha and Tharia, the two royal eunuchs who were on guard in the courtyard, ² he overheard their conversation and inquired into their intention and uncovered their plot to assassinate King Artaxerxes. He then informed the king concerning the two eunuchs. ³ The king ¹⁶ interrogated the two eunuchs and after they confessed they were led away to be executed. ⁴ The king wrote an official memorandum about these matters and Mordecai also wrote an account concerning it. ⁵ Then the king appointed Mordecai to a position in the court and rewarded him ¹⁷ because of these deeds.

⁶ Haman, the son of Hammedatha, a Bourgaean (*or, the Agarite*), ¹⁸ was in great favor with the king and set about to harm Mordecai and his people because of the king's two eunuchs.]]

[[END OF ADDITION A]]

<CHAPTER 1>

I Affairs in the court of Susa 1:1 - 2:23

A The wealth and glory of Ahasuerus 1:1 - 7

¹ These were events that took place in the days of ¹⁹ Ahasuerus (*Xerxes*) ²⁰ (the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia (*or, Nubia*), ²¹ ruling over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces.) ²² ² At that time King Ahasuerus occupied ²³ the throne in the royal acropolis (*or, citadel, fortified compound*) at Susa. ²⁴ ³ In the third year of his reign he hosted a banquet ²⁵ for all his government officials and courtiers. ²⁶ The aristocracy (*or, military chiefs*) of Persia and Media ²⁷ as well as the nobles and governors of the provinces were brought into his presence. ⁴ He displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor ²⁸ and pomp of his majesty ²⁹ for a long period of time, in fact, for six months. ⁵ When that time period was completed the king gave ³⁰ presents to all ³¹ in the citadel of Susa. Rich and poor alike took part in the banquet ³² which lasted for seven ³³ days. It was held in the courtyard (*or, garden*) of the royal pavilion. ⁶ There were white cotton drapes and blue

16 The Italian Common Language translation: "The king ordered an investigation."

17 Literally: "gave gifts to him."

18 The Dead Sea Scroll fragment 4Q550 has "Bagoshe." The French Common Language translation has "the braggart."

19 The Hebrew text begins with the word **וַיָּבֹא** "and it came to pass" which usually serves as a link, making it an odd way to begin the book of Esther. Was this a link to some previous information? Is 'Addition A' the information that leads up to "and it came to pass?" It is very likely that there might have been a brief introduction to the book that has been lost or the writer simply chose to begin in that rather unusual fashion.

20 The name means "king." He is called Xerxes I in Greek and reigned from 485 - 465 B.C.E. He was the son of Darius the Great.

21 The region translated Ethiopia was a region of the upper Nile, transliterated as Cush. The area was located south of the first cataract of the Nile river. This region included all of present day Sudan and a portion of Ethiopia.

22 Scholars question the number of provinces. Is this an exaggerated number?

23 The Hebrew word can mean "ruled over" or "took up residence."

24 The palace at Susa occupied a location overlooking the city.

25 Literally: "a drinking."

26 The LXX translates: "for his friends and other international statesmen." Literally: "the remaining nation." εθνη.

27 A province within Persia. Technically Susa was located in Media.

28 The Hebrew word here sometimes means "ornament."

29 MFT aptly translates: "his royal treasures in their splendor."

30 LXX inserts: "a wedding feast."

31 Literally: "men." Women presumably would have attended Queen Vashti's alternative party.

32 LXX: "drinking party."

33 LXX: "six."

(*or, violet*) hangings fastened by cords of fine linen and purple wool to the silver rings (*or, rods*) and marble (*or, alabaster*) pillars. There were couches of gold and silver on the mosaic pavement made of porphyry, marble, mother of pearl and precious stones.³⁴ 7 Drinks were served in golden goblets, goblets of a variety of designs (*or, no two alike*) and lavish amounts of royal wine as befitted the king's liberality.³⁵ 8 Drinking was in accordance to the fixed regulation and was not obligatory.³⁶ No one was forced to drink³⁷ for the king had given orders to all the palace stewards (*or, maitres d'hotel*) to do as every man desired.³⁸ Simultaneously Queen Vashti³⁹ gave a banquet for all the women of the royal palace of King Ahasuerus.

B Dethronement of Vashti 1:10 - 22

1 Vashti's refusal 1:10 - 12

10 On the seventh day, when the king was in high spirits⁴⁰ because of wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carkas⁴¹ the seven eunuchs who were in attendance as the royal servants of King Artaxerxes, 11 to bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal diadem (*or, crown*) in order to display her beauty in the presence of the officials and all the people, for she was a truly beautiful woman. 12 However, Queen Vashti refused to come when the king conveyed his command through the eunuchs.⁴² At this the king was furious,⁴³ and he fumed with anger.⁴⁴

2 The cabinet meets 1:13 - 22

13 Then the king said to the court astrologers⁴⁵ who knew the laws (for this was the royal practice, to consult with all those who were versed in law and precedent.) 14 The close advisors were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memuean,⁴⁶ the seven ministers of

34 Hebrew uncertain in verse 6. Accurate identification of fabrics and stones is difficult but one is able to recognize a sense of extravagant opulence. LXX reads: "which was decorated with white curtains of linen and cotton stretched on cords of purple, and these were attached to blocks of gold and silver resting on stone and marble columns. There were gold and silver couches placed on pavement of malachite, marble and mother of pearl, and there were coverings of transparent weaving, elaborately embroidered with roses arranged in a circle."

35 It is unclear whether the cups were each different or whether they did not drink of the same cup a second time. The Hebrew word for wine describes a 'sweet' wine. LXX: "the cups were of gold and a miniature cup was displayed made of ruby worth thirty thousand talents. There was an abundance of wine of the quality the king himself drank." The reference to thirty thousand talents would be the equivalent of 180,000,000 days wages, or, 1250 tons of precious metal, i.e. silver/gold.

36 Possibly the Hebrew words mean: "There were no restrictions."

37 **א** **ב** is translated "forced" but the meaning is unclear. Did the toastmaster usually enforce drinking? Was enforced participation suspended, or were the drinks "on the house?" LXX: "But the king wished to have it that way and he demanded that the stewards obey him and the desires of his guests."

38 Is the banquet description hyperbole? Or: was it an out of hand stag party? LXX: *οἰλονομος* is used for the word translated as stewards.

39 *Αστιν* in the LXX. Heroditus says her name was Amestria. Vashti is not found in ancient Persian records. The name means "beautiful woman."

40 LXX: "in good humor." The LXX does not mention wine.

41 Mehuman means "faithful." Biztha means "eunuch." Harbona means "bald man." Bigtha means "gift of God." Zethar means "sacrifice." The meanings of Abagtha and Carkas are unknown. LXX: Bazan, Tharra, Bonazea, Zatholtha, Abataza and Tharaba. In Hebrew these are described literally as: "who served in the face of the king."

42 Literally: "did not listen to him to come with the eunuchs."

43 LXX: "became sad (*or, distressed*)."

44 Note the comparison. 1. The reaction of the king. 2. The reaction of Haman in chapter 3.

45 So: emended by changing an 'ayn' to a 'daleth.' LXX: "and he said to his friends, 'Thus and so Astin (*Vashti*) spoke. Give therefore your ruling." It was the royal practice in Persia to consult with advisors.

46 Carshena means "plowman." Shethar means "star." Abmatha means "God given." Meres means "the forgetful one." Marsena means "forgetful man." The meanings of Tarshish and Memucan are unknown. LXX: "Arkesaius, Sarsathaius and Malerear who were governors of the Persians and Medes." Only three officials are mentioned in the LXX.

Persia and Media who had access to the king's presence⁴⁷ and occupied the foremost positions.⁴⁸ 15 What can be done legally about Queen Vashti, since she has not obeyed the command of King Ahasuerus that was conveyed to her by the eunuchs?"⁴⁹

16 Then Memucan⁵⁰ declared in the presence of the king along with his ministers, "Queen Vashti has committed an offense against (*or, insulted*) not only the king but also all the officials and nations that form the provinces of King Ahasuerus.⁵¹ 17 For this behavior the queen will make it evident⁵² to all women, causing them to despise (*or, have contempt toward*) their husbands,⁵³ since they will say, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him and she defied him.'⁵⁴ 18 This very day the ladies⁵⁵ of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's behavior will rebel against⁵⁶ all the king's officials and there will be endless contempt (*or, no end of disruption*) and anger. 19 If it please the king, let the royal edict be issued by him and let it be incorporated in the laws of the Persians and Medes that it may not be abrogated⁵⁷ that Vashti never be allowed to come into the presence of (*or, she will be banished from the presence of*) King Ahasuerus. Let the king bestow her royal position⁵⁸ upon another who is more worthy than she.⁵⁹ 20 Therefore, when the royal decree is proclaimed throughout all his kingdom, (vast as it is,) ⁶⁰ all women will respect (*or, honor*) their husbands, rich or poor alike."

21 This advice pleased the king and the officers (*or, viziers*) and the king did as Memucan proposed. 23 Dispatches were sent out to all the royal provinces, to every province in its own script and to every nation in its own language, ordering that every man is to wield authority in his own house [and give the orders he desires, using his native language.]⁶¹

<CHAPTER 2>

C The search for a new queen (Miss Persia) 2:1 - 4

1 Some time after this, when King Ahasuerus' anger had subsided he remembered⁶² Vashti and what she had done, and what he had decreed against her.⁶³ 2 Then the king's personal attendants said to him, "Why don't you authorize a search for young virgins⁶⁴ for your majesty. 3 Also, let the king appoint officers⁶⁵ in all the provinces of his realm to assemble all the beautiful young virgins,

47 Literally: "who saw the face of the king."

48 LXX: "who sat beside him in chief seats."

49 LXX: "and told him what must be done to Queen Astin (*Vashti*) for not obeying the order that the king had sent her by the eunuchs."

50 LXX: "Muchaeus."

51 NCV: "Queen Vashti has not only done wrong to the king alone. She has done wrong to all the important men and all the people of the empire of King Xerxes."

52 Literally: "go forth."

53 The Hebrew word for "husbands" is often translated as "owner" or "master."

54 The LXX has this verse in parentheses.

55 The word in the LXX implies that the women are of high rank.

56 So: emended slightly. Literally: "will tell."

57 Literally: "not pass away." LXX: "and may it in no other way be made better."

58 LXX: "her kingdom."

59 German Common Language translation inserts: "This must be recorded among the laws of the Medes and Persians which are irrevocable. Any other decision is excluded."

60 Omitted by LXX.

61 The last phrase is difficult in Hebrew and the bracketed phrase is omitted by the LXX.

62 LXX: "she was no longer remembered (*or, mentioned*)."

63 LXX: "How he had condemned her."

64 Hebrew: ^{and} **ו** LXX: "uncorrupted (*or, pure*) young girls."

65 LXX: "the community leaders."

bringing them to the harem⁶⁶ in Susa, the capital, under the supervision of Hegai⁶⁷ the king's eunuch who is guardian of the women and let them be provided with cosmetic treatments.⁶⁸ 4 Let the young woman who pleases the king become queen⁶⁹ instead of Vashti." This suggestion pleased the king and he did so.

D Mordecai and Esther 2:5 - 7

5 Now there was a Jew in Susa, the capital, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite, 6 who had been carried away⁷⁰ from Jerusalem in a group of captives who were carried away with king Jeconiah, king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezer, king of Babylon had driven into exile.⁷¹ 7 He had raised Hadassah,⁷² that is, Esther,⁷³ the daughter of his uncle⁷⁴ for she was an orphan. She was shapely and beautiful,⁷⁵ and when her parents died⁷⁶ Mordecai adopted her as his own daughter.⁷⁷

E Esther chosen as Queen 2:8 - 18

9 When the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many young women were assembled in Susa, the capital, under the supervision of Hegai⁷⁸ the harem keeper. Esther was also taken⁷⁹ into the king's palace and placed in the custody of Hegai who was their guardian. 9 Esther pleased Hegai, winning his favor,⁸⁰ and he quickly provided Esther with cosmetic treatments and her ration of tasty food,⁸¹ along with seven chosen young women from the king's palaces and provided her, and her attendants with the best apartment in the harem.⁸² 10 (Esther had not revealed her ethnic or family background,⁸³ since Mordecai had urged her not to make it known.⁸⁴ 11 Each day Mordecai walked back and forth in front of the harem in order to learn how Essther was and what was happening there.)⁸⁵

66 Literally: "house of women." Persian custom was that only Persians could become Queen. Cf. Heroditus III.84. Were these young women volunteers in a beauty contest or were they forced to participate?

67 Literally: "Hege." **!*** The name is omitted by LXX. In verses 8 & 15 Hegai **b*** is used. Surely these are the same person.

68 The Hebrew root word for cosmetics is "to rub" or "to polish." The LXX adds "and whatever else they need."

69 The Hebrew word is unusual. **+/;** It conveys the thought that she is not to truly become a queen but a consort who has no active role in ruling the country. Apparently once the choice was made Esther truly became a queen in the fullest sense, not simply a consort.

70 Some scholars feel the reference is to "Kish who was carried away..." Is the chronology correct? If Mordecai was led away into captivity under Jeconiah as a child in 597 B.C.E. he would have been more than 100 years old when Ahasuerus became king in 485 B.C.E.

71 Verse 6 uses the Hebrew word **%-*** 4 times, here translated as "carried away" or "exile" to express the Jewish plight.

72 **%2r%** No doubt her Hebrew name, meaning "myrtle." Some scholars feel the name is of Assyrian origin and means "bride."

73 Esther **9;2!** is felt by some scholars to be Persian, meaning "star" or the name of the Babylonian goddess Ishtar.

74 Thus not his niece as is claimed in the Vulgate.

75 Literally: "good of appearance." The description is more sensual for Esther than it had been for Vashti.

76 The LXX says her father's name was Aminidab, the brother of Mordecai's father. The name means "my kinsman is noble."

77 LXX: "brought her up until she was grown" but it could also be translated, "and planned to marry her."

78 LXX: Γαί Gai. since there is no letter "H" in Greek.

79 The I Targum states that she was taken forcibly. II Targum: "Mordecai hid Esther when the king's officers searched the land." LXX has a prayer: 14:3 - 9 which some scholars feel should be placed here. This prayer will be found at it's traditional location in this translation.

80 LXX: Χαρις.

81 LXX & Targums say she refused the food since it was not kosher. Hebrew: **:/** "delicious" whatever that might mean.

82 Literally: "the good of the house of the women." The Hebrew word implies a continual concern and care for Esther in the harem.

83 LXX: "race or country."

84 The meaning of the name Mordecai causes one to assume that he also did not reveal that he was Jewish. Cf. footnote 7.

85 Literally: "to learn the peace of Esther," i.e. her well being. Only eunuchs could enter the harem but the eunuchs apparently kept Mordecai informed.

12 When each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus, after being under the prescribed treatment⁸⁶ for twelve months (for this was the regular period of their beautification: six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and cosmetic treatment. 13 Then the young women left the harem to go to the palace.) At that time she was given whatever she desired⁸⁷ to take with her from the harem to the royal palace. 14 She went in to the king in the evening and in the morning she left to go to the second harem⁸⁸ in the custody of Shaashgaz,⁸⁹ the king's eunuch, who was the guardian in charge of the concubines. She did not go in to the king again, unless the king wanted her and she was summoned by name.

15 When the opportunity came for Esther, the daughter of Abilail,⁹⁰ the uncle of Mordecai, who had adopted her as his own daughter,⁹¹ to go in to the king, she made no special requests but followed the advice of Hegai, the king's eunuch⁹² who was in charge of the women. Now Essther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her. 16 When Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, in the royal palace⁹³ in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth,⁹⁴ in the seventh year of his reign.⁹⁵ 17 The king loved Esther (*or, was most devoted to Esther*) more than all the women and she found grace and favor in his sight, more than all the young women,⁹⁶ so that he placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen⁹⁷ instead of Vashti. 18 Then the king gave a great banquet for all his princes and servants; called "Esther's Banquet." He also granted tax relief⁹⁸ for the provinces and distributed gifts.⁹⁹

F Attempt on the king's life 2:19 - 23

19 [When the young women were gathered together the second time]¹⁰⁰ Mordecai was sitting at the royal gate. 20 Now Esther had not revealed her ethnicity nor her family as Mordecai had instructed; for Esther obeyed¹⁰¹ Mordecai just as she did when she was under his tutelage.¹⁰² 21 In

86 Literally: "according to regulations."

87 These items are not specified. Possibly clothing, cosmetics, jewelry, etc.

88 This would relegate the girl as a concubine who lived in virtual widowhood, unless the king called for her. [This is what prompted the story of the Arabian Nights.] The LXX clearly says "second harem," not giving the impression that she went to the king a second time.

89 The name is omitted by the LXX. Instead the name of a guard of the first harem is inserted.

90 The name means, "my father's might." LXX has the name Aminidab. Cf. footnote 76.

91 This phrase is omitted by the LXX. It seems to be dittography. Cf. v. 7.

92 LXX: "she neglected nothing of which the eunuch commanded."

93 Some scholars emend the word by changing the vowel points from those selected by the Masoretes, having it read: "the house of queens."

94 A hapax legomenon. The ninth month of the Hebrew calendar, mid-December to mid-January. In the LXX it is "Adar" or mid-February to mid-March.

95 This would be four years after Vashti had been deposed. Ca. 478 B.C.E.

96 This phrase is omitted in the LXX.

97 "made her queen" is omitted by the LXX.

98 Literally: "causing to rest."

99 This can possibly be translated as "gave a holiday." So: Vulgate. I Targum: "release from taxes with royal liberty." Other scholars feel it is a release of prisoners or granting furloughs for the military.

100 The Hebrew is not clear. Is this textual garbling? The line is omitted by the LXX. Scholars have tried to understand "the second time" and have come up with 6 different theories, none of which is unanimously accepted. 1. The king still wanted more wives. 2. The second gathering of virgins attended Esther's banquet. 3. They came in hope of being ladies-in-waiting. 4. The maidens from far off were still arriving. 5. This refers parenthetically to a period prior to Esther's marriage to the king. 6. As noted in verse 14, footnote 88.

101 Hebrew: **9/1/**

102 LXX: "Esther had not disclosed her country. This was her instruction from Mordecai but she was to revere God and keep his laws just as she obeyed him as a little girl under his care. She continued to worship God and to carry out God's command without abandoning her Jewish ways." The LXX makes her a pious Jewish woman.

those days, as Mordecai was sitting at the royal gate Bigtha and Teresh,¹⁰³ two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold became angry and plotted to assassinate King Ahasuerus.¹⁰⁴ 22 When Mordecai learned this he told Queen Esther and Esther reported it to the king in the name of Mordecai. 23 When the affair was investigated and found to be true, the men were both hanged on the gallows.¹⁰⁵ This was recorded in the Book of the Chronicles¹⁰⁶ with the king watching (*or, a memorandum was deposited in the royal library by order of the king.*).¹⁰⁷

<CHAPTER 3>

II The genocide is decreed for the Jews 2:1 - 15

A Mordecai's refusal 3:1 - 6

1 Some time later King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite,

¹⁰⁸

and raised his rank (*or, appointed him to be prime minister*), giving him precedence in seating higher than all the princes (*or, officials*) who were with him. 2 All the king's servants who were at the palace¹⁰⁹ said to Mordecai, "Why do you disobey (*or, flaunt*) the King's order?"¹¹⁰ 4 Even though they spoke to him day after day, he would not listen to them. They informed Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's behavior would be tolerated (*or, whether Haman would stand for Mordecai's behavior*),¹¹¹ for he had disclosed to them that he was a Jew.¹¹² 5 When Haman saw that Mordecai did not kneel or bow low to him, Haman was furiously enraged. 6 He felt it was beneath his lofty position (*or, he disdained*) to merely punish (*or, murder*) Mordecai,¹¹³ so, having been informed of Mordecai's ancestry, Haman planned to destroy all the Jews¹¹⁴ throughout the entire realm of Ahasuerus.¹¹⁵

B Haman's plans 3:7¹¹⁶

103 Bitgha means "gift of God." Teresh means "dry." The names are omitted in the LXX which says "chief bodyguards."

104 LXX: "When the king promoted Mordecai to a higher position, the two palace eunuchs who were officers of the king's bodyguard became angry and plotted to assassinate the king." Literally: "send a hand against." Two other eunuchs did succeed in assassinating him later, in 565 B.C.E.

105 Some scholars read this as "they were impaled on two stakes" which was often the punishment among the Persians.

106 Literally: "the book of acts of the days."

107 LXX: "To honor Mordecai the king ordered an account of this to be written down in the royal records so that his valued service would be remembered."

108 Josephus interpreted Agagite as Amalekite. So also the Targums & Talmud. LXX: Macedonian in 9:2 but here Bougaran Βουγάρων which might mean "braggart" or possibly is a word implying "bully" as a sign of reproach. The name Hammedatha means "given by Ham." The meaning of Mordecai is unknown. Agagite would be a descendant of Agag which means "violent." Scholars have struggled to discover the meaning of Agagite. Some solutions that have been suggested are: 1. A nickname for Haman. 2. An official title indicating some function. 3. The name of an unknown country. 4. Hebrew origin referring to a "Gagean" i.e. a northern enemy of Persia.

109 Literally: "at the king's gate."

110 LXX: "Why do you disregard the things said by the king?" This is the 6th different Hebrew word in Esther for "command."

111 LXX: "to see if Mordecai's words would stand for him, resisting the word of the king." The Talmud adds that Haman claimed divine honor and wore an idol on his clothing.

112 JB footnote: "i.e. that as a Jew he could not bow to a descendant of Agag the Amelekite king. I Samuel 15."

113 A possible translation is: "He felt it was not sufficient simply to lay hands on Mordecai alone."

114 The Hebrew inserts "the people of Mordecai" which is possibly dittography. Omitted by LXX. Some scholars emend one vowel so it reads: "with Mordecai."

115 LXX simply has a summary: "So they determined to kill all the Jews under Artaxerxes rule." In 1:10 - 12 and here there seems to be a mysterious refusal resulting in catastrophic rage.

116 Some scholars feel that since 3:7 - 11 interrupts the plot it is an interpolation.

7 In the first month (that is the month of Nisan),¹¹⁷ in the twelfth year¹¹⁸ of King Ahasuerus, Haman had lots cast (called Pur,¹¹⁹ which means 'the lot') to determine the correct day and month to carry out the plot. Day after day and month after month they cast the lot to determine the date until the lot fell on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month (which is the month of Adar).¹²⁰

C Haman plots against Mordecai 3:8 - 11

8 Then Haman spoke to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain group of people that are an unassimilated nation among the people in all the provinces of our realm; whose laws differ from those of other people. They do not obey the king's laws, so that it is not to the king's benefit to tolerate them (*or, it is not in your best interest to let them be*).¹²¹ 9 If it please the king, let an edict be prepared for their destruction (*or, the ethnic cleansing*) and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver¹²² into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business affairs, to be deposited in the royal treasury [*to pay the expenses for the program*]." 10 Then the king removed his signet ring¹²³ from his hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, the foe¹²⁴ of the Jews. 11 The king said to Haman, "Keep the money and the people are yours to do with as you see fit."¹²⁵

D The edict of genocide is issued 3:12 - 13

12 On the thirteenth day of the first month the king's secretaries were summoned and an edict in accordance with all that Haman had dictated, was written and sent to the king's regional governors¹²⁶ and to all the provincial governors as well as to the princes of all the people¹²⁷ in their own script and their own language. The edict was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring. 13 Written orders were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces, to destroy, massacre and exterminate (*or, do ethnic cleansing of*) the Jews, young and old, children and women, in one day, the thirteenth of the twelfth month which is the month of Adar and to plunder their possessions.

[[ADDITION B]]

E The text of the edict 12:1 - 7

[[12: The text of the decree:

The great King Artaxerxes writes to the governors
of the hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia
and the officials under them as follows:

117 Nisan is mid-March to mid-April.

118 Some manuscripts read "thirteenth" year. Ca. 472 B.C.E.

119 A non-Hebraic word meaning "lot" or "dice." The word, possibly Akkadian, is the basis for the word "Purim," the name of the feast at which this is read.

120 LXX: "In the twelfth year of King Artaxerxes Haman came to a decision by casting lots, taking the days and the months one by one, to fix on one day to destroy the whole race of Mordecai. The lot fell on the fourteenth (*one manuscript has the thirteenth*) day of the month of Adar."

121 Haman's introduction of genocide is done in a masterful manner.

122 This would be the equivalent of \$218,000,000 in silver or 375 tons according to NIV. but Bruce Metzger considers it to be 450 tons. One scholar calculated that it was 2/3 of the annual income of the empire. No doubt a bit of hyperbole.

123 I.e. the seal to be placed on documents to authenticate them.

124 In Esther four different Hebrew words are used for enemy / foe. This word implies one who is hostile or troublesome.

125 LXX: "Keep the money and do what you want with the nation." Scholars feel the thought is: Haman need not give silver to the treasury but has the right to keep for himself anything that was looted from the Jews in this program.

126 Literally: "protector of the land" or "overseer" who was an overseer of the province in ancient Persia. Traditionally it has been translated as "satrap" which is not understood in the 21st Century.

127 LXX adds: "from India to Ethiopia. There were 127 provinces in all."