

Sabbath Brothers



March

GRAGGER



HAMAN



Costumes & Wine



The Talmud asserts that "a person is obligated to drink on Purim until he does not know the difference between 'blessed is Mordechai and cursed is Haman"



HAMANTASCHEN



Greece

Black Sea

Turkey

Caspian Sea

Lost Multiple Battles with Greece

Assyria

Iraq

Persian Empire
c. 357 BCE

Afghanistan

Syria

Shushan

Babylon

Jordan

Pakistan

Mediterranean Sea

Israel

Arabian Desert

Persian Gulf

Indian Ocean

Egypt

Esther

The book of Esther has been called the “Book of Providential Care”

The book is named after its principle character, Esther – an orphan child who would become queen of Persia.

The name “Esther means “Star”

Esther’s Hebrew name is “Hadassah” meaning “myrtle tree” (Esther 2:7)

The myrtle tree was native to Babylonia and transplanted to Israel.

The myrtle tree has a flower that has been described as a “starburst”

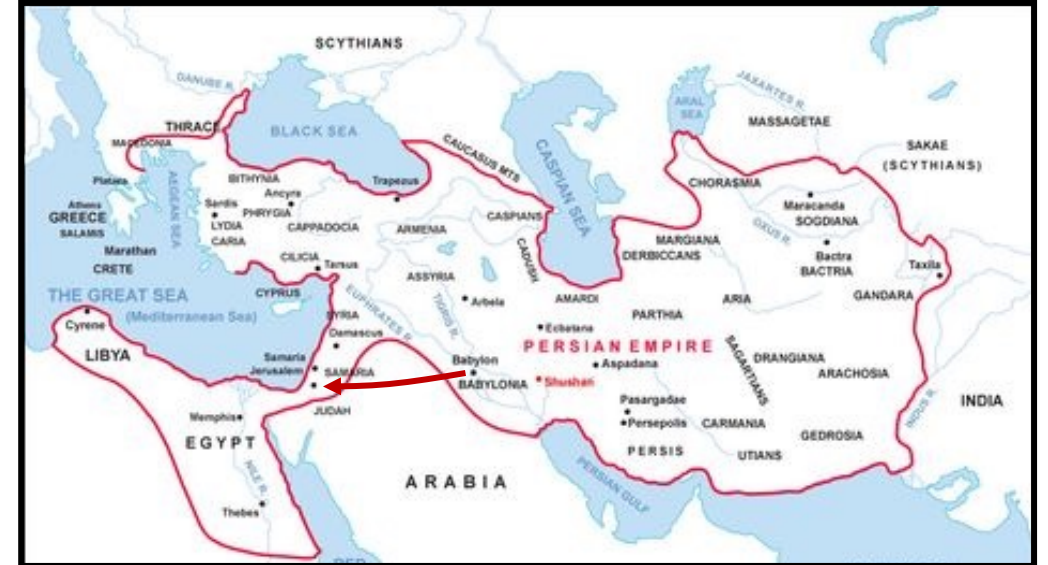
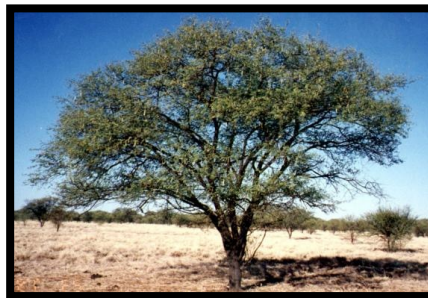
Initially (Post-Captivity) approximately 50,000 Jews made “*Aliyah*” to the land of Israel (Ezra 2:64-65)

In Hebrew, term “*Aliyah*” means “to go up”

Deliverance is from God’s grace

The term “*Aliyah*” refers to the immigration of Jews from the captivity and diaspora to the Land of Israel

Esther lived during the “Post-Babylon” captivity; however, this Jewish lady had not returned to Jerusalem in spite of Jeremiah’s bidding.



Some Jews knew that God had instructed them to return to the Promised Land and obeyed while unfaithful Jews did not return to the Promised Land.

The name “Mordecai” was listed as one who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:2)



Esther

Private readings take 25 minutes while a public synagogue reading can take 45 minutes as Haman is booed & Mordecai cheered.

The book of Esther is the only Biblical recording of Purim

Purim means "Lots"

Haman casts lots to determine the date of the Jewish extermination
Esther 3:7; 9:26

Five Jewish "Megillot" (meaning "Scrolls")

Small Scrolls Read Publicly at Memorials

Book	Feast Publicly Read	Timeframe
1. Song of Solomon	Passover/Seder	March/April
2. Ruth	Pentecost/Shavuot	May/June
3. Lamentations	Ninth of Av/Tisha B'Av	July/August
4. Ecclesiastes	Tabernacles/Sukkot	September/October
5. Esther	Purim	February/March

All Five of these Book are in the "Writings" (Ketuvim) section of the Jewish Scriptures (Tanakh)

The Dead Sea Scroll discovery revealed fragments of every book of the Tanakh except for the book of Esther.

Martin Luther did not appreciate Esther (or Song of Solomon or Ecclesiastes), because Luther felt that it focused too much on the Jews.

No New Testament writer quotes from the book of Esther.

No Spiritual being is directly mentioned in Esther; however, "YAHWEH" is found four times in Acrostics (Coding of Bible).

Other topics unmentioned in Esther include prayer, Palestine, Israel, faith and the law of Moses.

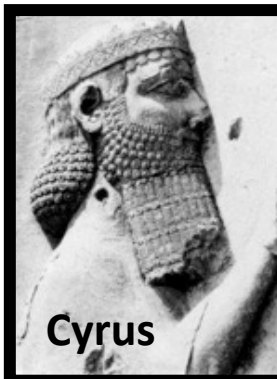
Kings of Persia

1.	Cyrus "the Great"	550-530BC	Liberated the Jews from Babylon
2.	Cambyses	530-522BC	Impedes Work on Temple
3.	Pseudo-Smerdis/Gaumata	522BC	Trying to Usurp power for Mede Control
4.	Darius I "the Great"	522-486BC	Reinstates Policies of Cyrus (Ezra 6:14-15)
5.	Xerxes "the Great"	486-464BC	Husband of Esther
6.	Artaxerxes	464-424BC	Ezra 4:7-11, 23; 7:1-21; 8:1; Nehemiah 2:1, 5:14, 13:6

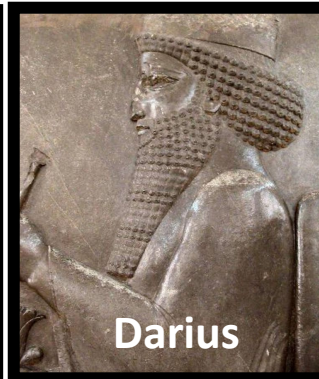
Cyrus (Ezra 4:6)

Darius (Daniel 9:1)

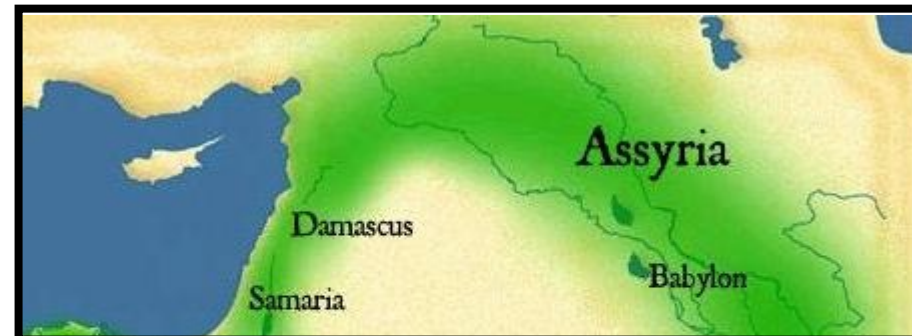
Xerxes/Artaxerxes (Esther)



Cyrus



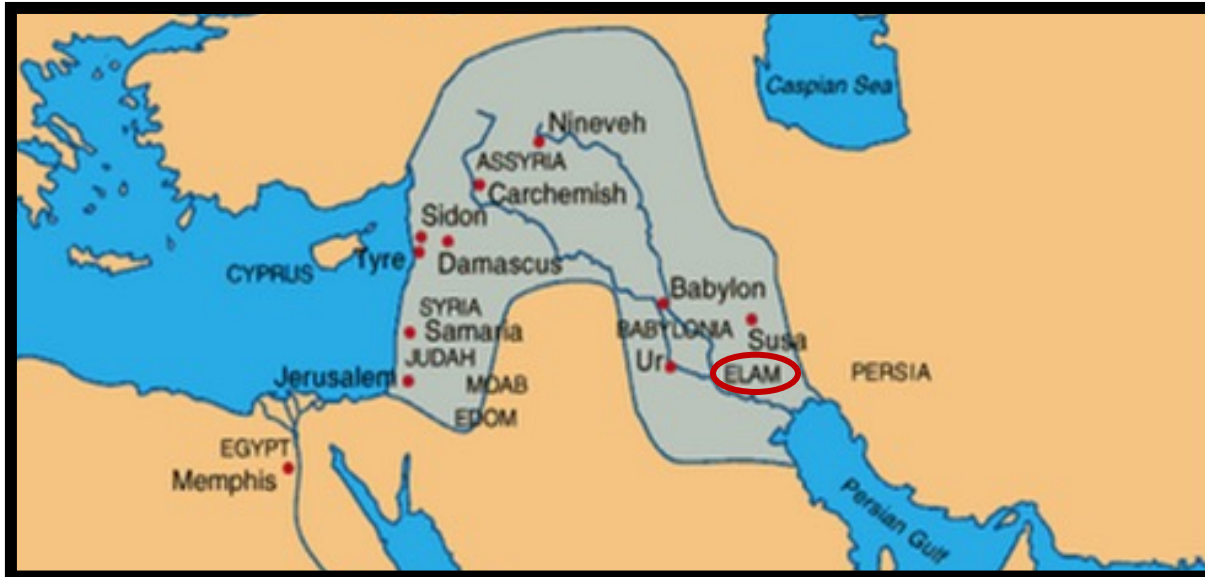
Darius



The Story of Esther

One reason that this story of Esther might resonate beyond the Jew to the Babylonians is due to the meanings behind the key characters.

The name Elam is an Assyrian word meaning “*high*,” and it represented a group of people living east of Babylon who had ongoing war with them.



Analogous Story of Babylon overcoming Elam

Name of Character in Book of Esther	Relation to Babylon or Elam
VASHTI	<i>Elamite Goddess</i>
ESTHER (Aramaic for Ishtar)	<i>Babylonian Goddess</i>
HADASSEH	<i>Babylonian for Bride</i>
MORDECAI (Hebrew for Marduk)	<i>Babel God</i>
HAMAN	<i>Elamite God</i>

The predominant victors in the book of Esther have corresponding Babylonian names while those who lose have Elamite undertones.

A King's Party (Esther 1:1-8)

¹ Now it happened in the days of Ahasuerus, the Ahasuerus who **reigned from India to Cush** over 127 provinces,

² in those days as King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne which *was* at **the citadel in Susa**,

³ in the third year of his reign he held a banquet for all his officials and attendants, the army *officers* of Persia and Media, the nobles and the officials of his provinces, in his presence.

⁴ At that time **he displayed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor of his great majesty for many days, 180 days.**

⁵ When these days were finished, the king held a banquet lasting seven days for all the people who were present at the citadel in Susa, **from the greatest to the least**, in the courtyard of the garden of the king's palace.

⁶ *There were curtains of fine white and violet linen held by cords of fine purple linen on silver rings and marble columns, and couches of gold and silver on a mosaic floor of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl, and mineral stones.*

⁷ **Drinks were served in golden vessels of various**

kinds, and the royal wine was plentiful in proportion to the king's bounty.

⁸ But **the drinking was *done* according to the royal law**; there was no compulsion, for so the king had given orders to each official of his household, that he was to do as each person pleased.



Ahasuerus may be a title like "Pharaoh"

The Persian kingdom spread larger than any before as it stretched from India throughout the mid-east to Cush (the northern part of Africa).

Susa (or Shushan) was the Fall palace 200 miles east of Babylon (Daniel 8:2).

This feast in the third year is connected to a historical banquet given in preparation of the expedition against Greece to revenge his father's defeat 15 years earlier at Marathon.

Ahasuerus displayed his wealth for half of the year which shows his great pride (therefore, his great exposure to downfall).

All were invited to join the party; attendance did not concern personal standing or importance.

The Persian name "Khshayârsâ" became "Xerxes" in Greek and "Assuerus" in Latin

As the white linen (purity) hung with purple (royal) linen cords on silver (redemption) rods attached to marble (strength) columns, every participant could attest to the greatness of the king.

The name "Xerxes" is typically used because most of the information about Xerxes comes from Herodotus who is a Greek historian.

The Greeks found numerable gold chalices when they conquered Persia.

This celebration was in preparation for the assault on Greece. Persia lost the expensive "Second Persian War" to the Greeks (481-479) which began by the Persian emissaries being killed in Athens.

When the King drank, everyone was required to drink; however, the amount that each individual drank (from a sip to a gulp) was completely up to the individual.

Athens used naval forces while Spartans amassed a land force including the 300 Spartans that delayed the Persian army for a week at the narrow pass (between mountains and sea) of Thermopylae. Xerxes would end up fleeing the Second Persian War

Persians were known for their drinking bouts

"Artaxerxes" was the son of Ahasuerus

The Self-Centered Queen (Esther 1:9-12)

⁹ **Queen Vashti** also held a banquet for the women in the palace which belonged to King Ahasuerus.

¹⁰ On the **seventh day**, when the heart of the king was cheerful with wine, he ordered Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carkas, the **seven eunuchs** who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus,

¹¹ to bring Queen Vashti before the king with *her* royal turban **in order to display her beauty to the people and the officials**, for she was beautiful.

¹² But **Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's order** delivered by the eunuchs. So the king became very angry, and his wrath burned within him.

Legend is that Vashti (historically called "Amestris") was granddaughter of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar

The King was beckoning Vashti to simply appear in all her glory to bring glory to the king.

The Eunuchs of Ahasuerus

(Esther 1:10)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Meanings</u>
1.	Mehuman	"Faithful/Multitude/Making an Uproar"
2.	Biztha	"Bound"
3.	Harbona	"His destruction/his sword"
4.	Bigtha	"Garden/Gift of Fortune"
5.	Abagtha	"Fortunate one/Father of the Wine Press"
6.	Zethar	"He that examines/beholds"
7.	Carkas	"The covering of the Lamb"

Story
The multitude were bound for destruction but were given a gift of fortune by the Father of the wine press
Who sees the covering of the Lamb.

The number "7" represents "fullness" & "completeness"

The king was not asking; he was summoning his queen; her refusal resulted in Vashti being replaced by a woman "more worthy" (1:19).

The King of Kings in Heaven had the beautiful bride of Israel that continued to deny His timing and testimony, so He turned to the Gentiles.

Just as King Ahasuerus sent eunuchs, the Heavenly King repeatedly sent prophets to call His people.

"Since they have abandoned Me and have burned incense to other gods so that they may provoke Me to anger with all the work of their hands, My wrath burns against this place, and it shall not be quenched."

(2 Kings 22:17)

Vashti means 'beautiful woman'

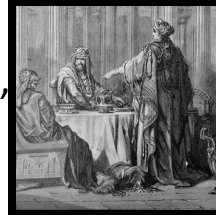


Judgment on the Queen (Esther 1:13-21)

¹³ Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times—for it was the custom of the king *to speak* this way before all who knew *Persian* law and justice ¹⁴ and were close to him, *namely*, Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the **seven officials of Persia and Media who had access to the king's presence** and sat in the first place in the kingdom—

¹⁵ “According to law, what is to be done with Queen Vashti, since she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus delivered by the eunuchs?”

¹⁶ And in the presence of the king and the *other* officials, Memucan said, “Queen Vashti has wronged not only the king but *also* all the officials and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.



¹⁷ For the queen's conduct will become known to all the women so as to make their own husbands despicable in their sight, when they say, ‘King Ahasuerus commanded that Queen Vashti be brought in to his presence, but she did not come.’

¹⁸ And this day the wives of the officials of Persia and Media who have heard about the queen's conduct will talk *about it* to all the king's officials, and there will be plenty of contempt and anger.

¹⁹ If it pleases the king, let a royal edict be issued by him and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be repealed, that Vashti may not come into the presence of King Ahasuerus, and let the king give her royal position to another who is more worthy than she.

²⁰ When the king's edict which he will make is heard throughout his kingdom, great as it is, then all women will give honor to their husbands, great and small.”

²¹ Now *this* word pleased the king and the officials, and the king did as Memucan proposed.

Memucan means “certain truth”

Written law could not be modified (Matthew 5:18) and results in loss of fellowship with the King.

The wise King confers with counsel of men who understand the times (1 Chronicles 12:32) as well as law and justice.

The “signs of the times” transcends world events

Seven Officials of Persia & Media as the King's Advisors (Esther 1:14)

Name	Meanings	Storyline (uninspired)
1. Carshena	“A Lamb/sleeping”	<i>From sleeping to searching through invisible death to find one who is worthy amid bitterness of sin that is certain.</i>
2. Shethar	“Searching/a star”	
3. Admatha	“A Cloud of death/mortal vapor”	
4. Tarshish	“Contemplation/examination”	
5. Meres	“Worthy/lofty/abscess”	
6. Marsena	“Bitterness of a bramble”	
7. Memucan	“To Prepare/Certain/True”	

These seven elders represented seven families closest to the King. The King was to marry a daughter of one of the seven families who was to be his primary wife – Vashti came from one of these seven families (Esther 7:14)

The King asked about the consequences of disobeying the law

Disobedience and sin affects all of mankind as rebellion grows and cursed ramifications are felt.

Disrespect for authority, anger, selfishness, etc. undermine (undermine) all relationships whether physical or spiritual.

The manner that one treats another reflects a innate tendency to treat the Lord in the same way.

An acrostic is utilized in four critical parts of Esther (1:20, 5:4; 5:13; 7:7) where consecutive words spell “YHWH;” twice are forward, and twice are backward.

The Persian King selected Esther 4 years after the feast.

The Orphan Esther (Esther 2:1-7)

¹After these things, **when the anger of King Ahasuerus had subsided**, he remembered Vashti and what she had done, and what had been decided regarding her.

²Then the king's attendants, who served him, said, **"Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king.**

³And may the king appoint overseers in all the provinces of his kingdom, and **have them bring every beautiful young virgin to the citadel of Susa, to the harem**, into the custody of **Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women**; and let their cosmetics be given *to them*.

⁴Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen in place of Vashti." And the suggestion pleased the king, and he did accordingly.

⁵There was a Jew at the citadel in Susa whose name was **Mordecai**, the son of **Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjaminite**,

⁶who had been taken from Jerusalem with the exiles who had been deported with **Jeconiah king of Judah**, whom **Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon** had deported.

⁷He was the guardian to **Hadassah, that is Esther**, his uncle's daughter, for she had no father or mother. Now the young woman was beautiful of form and face, and when her father and her mother died, **Mordecai** took her as his own daughter.

There is a "Time Gap" between chapters 1 & 2 - the celebration of the king was held in the third year of his reign (1:3), and Esther is not brought before the king until the seventh year of his reign (2:16).

Persia was defeated disastrously by Greece reducing the Persian army of 2 million men to 5,000.

It appears that the King missed Vashti in spite of her rebellion.

The historian Josephus states that the King regretted putting Vashti away; however, if she were to regain her authority, the lives of the seven counselors would be at risk.

After King Ahasuerus' failed conquest of Greece in the "Second Persian War," he returned home and spent much more time with his harem.

The term "Harem" originates from the Arabic term "Hareem" which means forbidden, sacred or set apart.

Hegai ("Separation; Meditation") was to prepare these potential brides of the King.

In the same way, the church is to be sanctified (set apart) for Christ (Eph 5:25-27; Rev 19:7-9, 21:2, 9; Is 54:5, 62:5; 2 Cor 11:2; Mk 2:19-20)

The term "eunuch" can refer to one who was castrated or simply to a high level official.

Mordecai means "contrition" or "bitter."

Mordecai (like King Saul) was a Benjamite, so Esther was from a royal line



Archeologists have discovered a cuneiform tablet from Borsippa near Babylon that mentions a man by the name of **Mardukaya (Mordecai)** in relation with the Persian court during the period of Ahasuerus.

Mordecai had been established in captivity when the evil Jeconiah was taken into Babylonian exile (2 Kings 24:10-15)

In spite of the evil enslavement by this world, God always maintains representation: Egypt/Joseph; Babylon/Daniel; Persia/Mordecai

Preparation to Meet the King (Esther 2:8-15)

⁸ So it came about, when the command and decree of the king were heard and **many young ladies were gathered to the citadel of Susa into the custody of Hegai**, that Esther was taken to the king's palace into the custody of Hegai, who was in charge of the women.



⁹ Now the young lady pleased him and found favor with him. So he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and food, gave her seven choice female attendants from the king's palace, and transferred her and her attendants to the best place in the harem.

¹⁰ Esther did not reveal her people or her kindred, because

Mordecai had instructed her that she was not to reveal *them*.



¹¹ And every day Mordecai walked back and forth in front of the courtyard of the harem to learn how Esther was and what was happening to her.

¹² Now when the turn came for each young woman to go in to King Ahasuerus, after the end of her twelve months under the regulations for the women—for the days of their beauty treatment were completed as follows: **six months with oil of myrrh and six months with balsam oil and the cosmetics for women**—

¹³ the young woman would go in to the king in this way: **anything that she desired was given her to take with her from the harem to the king's palace.**

¹⁴ In the evening she would enter and in the morning she would return to the second harem, to the custody of **Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines**. She would not go in to the king again, unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.

¹⁵ Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai who had taken her as his daughter, came to go in to the king, **she did not request anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the women, advised**. And Esther was finding favor in the eyes of all who saw her.

Abihail means
"Father of
Strength"

Josephus recorded that Ahasuerus kept 400 concubines

The ancient historian Plutarch documents that "Artaxerxes" (the son of Ahasuerus) had 360 concubines

In spite of the many who desired to be chosen by the King, Esther won favor with Hegai.

Esther had seven (full, complete, satisfied) maid servants and was domiciled in the most luxurious place.

Esther was obedient to the counsel of Mordecai that she should conceal her Jewish heritage

Esther would also be obedient to the guidance of Hegai

Myrrh was used in preparation to see the King (as Myrrh and other ointments were also used in the preparation of death).

Six represents the "number of man", and two "six month periods" were preparation to see the King.

The term "you can't take it with you" did not apply as the woman was allowed her wishes to bring anything before the King, but her appeal may not align with the King's will.

King Ahasuerus had three divisions in his harem: wives, concubines, virgins

In the light (of morning), the King would send the woman to Shaashgaz ("He who shears the sheep"), and she would not return to the King unless He called her by name.

Esther listened to the recommendations of the King's servant because he understood the mind of the King.

Assassination Plot of the King (Esther 2:17-23)

¹⁷ The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found favor and kindness with him more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal turban on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti.

¹⁸ Then the king held a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his officials and his servants; he also made a holiday for the provinces and gave gifts in proportion to the king's bounty.

¹⁹ Now when the virgins were gathered together for the second time, then Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.

²⁰ Esther *still* had not revealed her relatives or her people, just as Mordecai had instructed her; for Esther did what Mordecai told her just as she had when under his care.

²¹ In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's officials from those who guarded the door, became angry and sought to attack King Ahasuerus.

²² But the plot became known to Mordecai and he informed Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in Mordecai's name.

²³ Then when the plot was investigated and found *to be so*, they were both hanged on a wooden *gallows*; and it was written in the Book of the Chronicles in the king's presence.



The King crowned his choice for a bride and gave her a celebratory banquet for all of his servants.

This celebration was the second time that the women met the King while Mordecai sat at the King's gate.

Obedience and submission were not new qualities of Esther, but characteristics that she had observed from childhood.

Josephus records that a Jewish slave of one of the door-keeping assassins overheard the plot and revealed it to Mordecai.

The King investigated Esther's account of the risk that she relayed from Mordecai.

This is Chronicled in the King's Persian records and not the Chronicles of Scripture.

"Then he said to me, 'Write: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are the true words of God.'" (Revelation 19:9)

The first contestants had initially been brought together, and now that Esther was chosen, the contestants were assembled a second time to honor her.

Two doorkeepers, Bigthan ("In the press/Giving meat") and Teresh ("Firm/Desire"), became assassins in their anger at the King.

These may have been the two personal guards at the bedroom or study of Ahasuerus. These men had personal, private access to Mordecai.



Mordecai exposed the plot against the King and the two offenders were impaled on a stick or hung at the gallows (crucifixion was invented by Persians and later adopted by Romans)

Haman Plots Against Jews (Esther 3:1-11)

¹ After these events **King Ahasuerus honored Haman**, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and promoted him and established his authority over all the officials who *were* with him.

² All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman; for so the king had commanded regarding him. But **Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage.**

³ Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you violating the king's command?"

⁴ **Now it was when they had spoken daily to him and he would not listen to them, that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew.**

⁵ When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, **Haman was filled with rage.**

⁶ **But he considered it beneath his dignity to kill Mordecai alone, for they had told him *who* the people of Mordecai *were*; so Haman sought to annihilate all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, who *were found* throughout the kingdom of Ahasuerus.**

⁷ In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, **Pur, that is the lot, was cast before Haman from day to day and from month to month, until the twelfth month, that is the month Adar.**

⁸ Then 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 all *other* people and they do not comply with the king's laws, so **it is not in the king's interest to let them remain.**

⁹ **If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed that they be eliminated, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who carry out the *king's* business, to put into the king's treasuries."**

¹⁰ Then the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to **Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.**

¹¹ And the king said to Haman, "The silver is yours, and the people *also*, to do with them as you please."



This occurred four years and two months after Esther became Queen (Esther 2:16).

At the time when one would think praiseworthy Mordecai would be honored, instead it was a new character, Haman who was an Agagite from Kings of Amalek (1 Samuel 15:8).

While all of the King's servants revered Haman, Mordecai would not submit nor humble himself to this evil leader

Mordecai would not bow to an Amalekite

Lots were cast (Proverbs 16:33) for the date of destruction.

The King's signet ring would "seal" the Jews fate

The Amalekites were the ancient enemies of the Israelites (Ex 17:8-16; Numbers 24:7; 1 Chronicles 4:42-43). They were the first to attack the Jewish people during the Exodus from Egypt. When the Amalekites saw weary Israel, they attacked the elderly and young who were lagging behind. (Deuteronomy 25:17-18).

The King's subjects were exalted instead of the King Himself.

Evil is based on pride – exalting one's self. Believers should be very careful when they become offended

The Feast of Purim is celebrated on this date because Israel would be delivered – the planned date gave a full year before day of event.

"Pur" meant "lots", "dice" or the casting of lots/dice; archeologists have found triangular lots in the ancient grounds of Susa.

Ten thousand talents of silver were 2/3 the annual budget of the kingdom of Persia.

Consequences of Righteousness

REFERENCE	ANCESTRY	ACTION	POSSIBLE RESULT
1 SAMUEL 15 (Saul disobeys)	Agag is Haman's Ancestor	Bad that Saul didn't kill Agag	Israel could have been eliminated
2 SAMUEL 16 (David spares)	Shimei is Mordecai's Ancestor	Good that David didn't kill Shimei	Mordecai used to save Israel

Esther is Encouraged to Act (Esther 4:5-17)

⁵ Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king's eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her, and ordered him *to go to Mordecai to learn what this mourning was and why it was happening.*

⁶ So 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, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the elimination of the Jews.



⁸ He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their annihilation, so that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and plead with him for her people.

⁹ So Hathach came back and reported Mordecai's words to Esther.

¹⁰ Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply to Mordecai:*

¹¹ "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king in the inner courtyard, who is not summoned, he has *only one law*, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days."



¹² And they reported Esther's words to Mordecai.

¹³ Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the *other Jews*.



¹⁴ For if you keep silent at this time, liberation and rescue will arise for the Jews from another place, and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty **for such a time as this?**"

¹⁵ Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai,

¹⁶ "Go, gather all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants also will fast in the same way. And then I will go in to the king, which is not in accordance with the law; and if I perish, I perish."

¹⁷ So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.



Hathach ("truly") was used as the mediator between Mordecai and Esther.

Mordecai spent much time at the King's gate (Esther 2:19, 21, 3:2, 4:2, 5:9, 13, 6:10, 12)

It was illegal for someone grieving to go any closer than the gate; therefore, anyone with any grievance would have been stopped at the gate.

There is only one law – the death penalty (Rom 3:20, 5:20-21, 7:5, 8:2; 1 Cor 15:56) for anyone not chosen to be called to the King (1 Pet 2:9).

Jesus provides the righteous scepter that extends towards those who receive it (Hebrews 1:8)

Esther has found something more important than life itself as she commits to God's plan for her life or even for her death (Daniel 3:17-18)

Esther wanted to know the reason for Mordecai's behavior; she did not condemn his grief but sought understanding.

Haman must have made his "grant" (for the slaughter of the Jews) to the King public knowledge to the exact amount.

The Law of the Lord is also an edict on the judgment of sin

The consequences of the law can be used to instruct on the proper approach to the King, implore his favor (only through Jesus), and intercede for others.

Esther was not to take solace and be complacent in the safety of her position in the King's palace (Mt 12:34; 15:11; Rom 10:8-10)

Silence would have been a grave sin.

God's providence might be to use you in His salvation.

God has an overarching divine plan for each of His individual people.

Banquet for Haman & the King (Esther 5:1-8)

¹ Now it came about on the **third day** that **Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner courtyard of the king's palace in front of the king's rooms**, and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room, opposite the entrance to the palace.

² **When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the courtyard, she obtained favor in his sight; and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter which *was* in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the top of the scepter.**

³ Then the king said to her, **"What is *troubling* you, Queen Esther? And what is your request? Up to half of the kingdom it shall be given to you."**



⁴ Esther said, **"If it pleases the king, may the king and Haman come this day to the banquet that I have prepared for him."**

⁵ Then the king said, **"Bring Haman quickly so that we may do as Esther desires." So the king and Haman came to the banquet which Esther had prepared.**



⁶ As they drank their wine at the banquet, the king said to Esther, **"What is your request, for it shall be granted to you. And what is your wish? Up to half of the kingdom it shall be done."**

⁷ So Esther replied, **"My request and my wish is:**

⁸ **if I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my request and do what I wish, may the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king says."**



On the third (revelation) day, Esther shows how to approach the throne – by being clothed correctly covered in royal robes. (Revelation 19:7-8, 14).

Before Esther ever came near the King, he saw her and she gained the King's approval (1 John 4:19).

Esther positions the request as seeking to be pleasing to the King.

It appears that Esther began to tell the King her true request, but seems to have lost confidence and courage.

Archeologists have found the framework of the palace which fits the location and description exactly.

No one could enter or leave the palace without the view of the King.

The King asked three times about Esther's petition or request (5:3, 6 & 7:2) – the first two times Esther requested the King and Haman to come to a banquet, but the third time responded to evil Haman's plan

Esther postponed until the next day to tell the King what Haman has done.

Esther found the favor of the King by Grace – not by Law; the King held out his scepter and Esther went near and touched it.
Esther 5:2; 8:4

Esther 4:11	<i>"...the king has but one law: that he be put to death. The only exception to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life."</i>	The Law requires Death before the King
Ps 45:6, Ps 2:9, Rev 2:27, 12:5	<i>"Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom."</i>	God's scepter of Justice must be satisfied
Hebrews 1:8	<i>But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom."</i>	The King's scepter of Righteousness is the only pardon

Haman Prepares The Gallows (Esther 5:9-14)

⁹ Then Haman went out that day joyful and pleased of heart; but **when Haman saw Mordecai at the king's gate and that he did not stand up or tremble before him, Haman was filled with anger against Mordecai.**

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

¹¹ Then Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and his many sons, and every *occasion on which* the king had honored him and how he had promoted him above the officials and servants of the king.

¹² Haman also said, "Even Esther the queen let no one except me come with the king to the banquet which she had prepared; and tomorrow also I am invited by her with the king."

¹³ Yet all of this does not satisfy me every time I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

¹⁴ Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, "Have a wooden *gallows* fifty cubits high made, and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it; then go joyfully with the king to the banquet." And the advice pleased Haman, so he had the wooden *gallows* made.



Mordecai may have had an official position at the gate of King Ahasuerus (Esther 10:2).

Haman's friends are mentioned first and then his wife, Zeresh ("misery/strange/dispersed inheritance/gold")

Haman found Esther's invitation an exceptional honor.

Haman's wife (and friends) urge that in spite of Haman's boasting and pride, his focus should be on punishing Mordecai with high crosses to impale him. (Esther 9:13)

Instead of quelling Haman's evil intent, his wife stoked the fire within him to perform evil; Haman's wife, Zeresh, was a much different spouse than Esther.

Mordecai did not respect nor fear the evil man, Haman (Psalm 56:4, 11; Proverbs 29:25).

Haman boasted about his promotion, position and riches to his wife and friends.

The fleeting pleasures and treasures of the world do not satisfy; a worldly person is always wanting more.

In fact, a good measure as to whether something is beneficial is if it breeds satisfaction or desire for more when it is over (e.g. vacations, pleasures, etc. expand into growing addictions).

Hate harms and eventually destroys the one emitting that emotion.

A cubit is the distance from a man's longest finger to his elbow, about 18 to 20 inches making the gallows about 75-85 feet high

The Persians were noted for impaling people, not for hanging them, so these may have been sharp stakes.

"God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Proverbs 11:2)

Mordecai Is Honored (Esther 6:1-13)

¹ During that night the king could not sleep, so he gave an order to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.

² And it was found written what Mordecai had reported about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who were doorkeepers, that they had sought to attack King Ahasuerus.

³ Then the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?"

And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

⁴ So the king said, "Who is in the courtyard?" Now Haman had *just* entered the outer courtyard of the king's palace in order to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the wooden *gallows* which he had prepared for him.

⁵ So the king's servants said to him, "Behold, Haman is standing in the courtyard." And the king said, "Have him come in."

⁶ Haman then came in and the king said to him, "What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"

⁷ Therefore Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king desires to honor,

⁸ have them bring a royal robe which the king has worn, and the horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal turban has been placed;

⁹ then *order them* to hand the robe and the horse over to one of the king's noble officials, and have them dress the man whom the king desires to honor, and lead him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, 'So it shall be done for the man whom the king desires to honor.'"

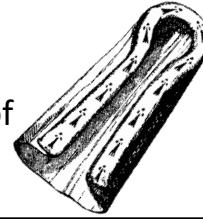
¹⁰ Then the king said to Haman, "Quickly, take the robe and the horse just as you have said, and do so for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the king's gate; do not fail to do anything of all that you have said."

¹¹ So Haman took the robe and the horse, and dressed Mordecai, and led him *on horseback* through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "So it shall be done for the man whom the king desires to honor."

¹² Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate, while

Haman hurried home, mourning, with *his* head covered.

¹³ And Haman informed Zeresh his wife and all his friends of 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 origin, you will not prevail over him, but will certainly fall before him."



King Ahasuerus could not sleep (similar to Daniel 6:18), so he called for this record of the King. God was involved even in the amount of sleep.

Believers should read God's Word when they cannot sleep to determine the best course of action

Five years had passed without Mordecai receiving recognition of saving King's life

The King desired to justly reward Mordecai for his faithful act.

Ambitious Haman seemed to be the first at court that day because he was going to ask of the King to have Mordecai hanged.

Haman's hatred for God's people would be his downfall; in the same way, evil people will bear the fruits of their evil plans.

Items for those honored by a King

A Royal Robe

- A White Robe (Revelation 6:11)
- Robe of Righteousness (Isaiah 61:10)
- Priests clothed with Salvation (2 Chronicles 6:41; Ps 132:16)

A Royal Horse

- The armies of heaven on white horses (Rev 19:11, 14)

A Crown Presented by the King

- Imperishable Crown (1 Corinthians 9:24-25)
- Crown of Rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19)
- Crown of Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8)
- Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:4)
- Crown of Life (Revelation 2:10)

King Ahasuerus warns Haman not to "*Fail*" (*Tappei*); the Hebrew word is used only in Esther 6:10 in Scripture

v'NaHaFoch Hu

There is a Jewish phrase
v'NaHaFoch Hu
(Pronounced "Va-Na-Ha-Fa-Who")
which can mean:

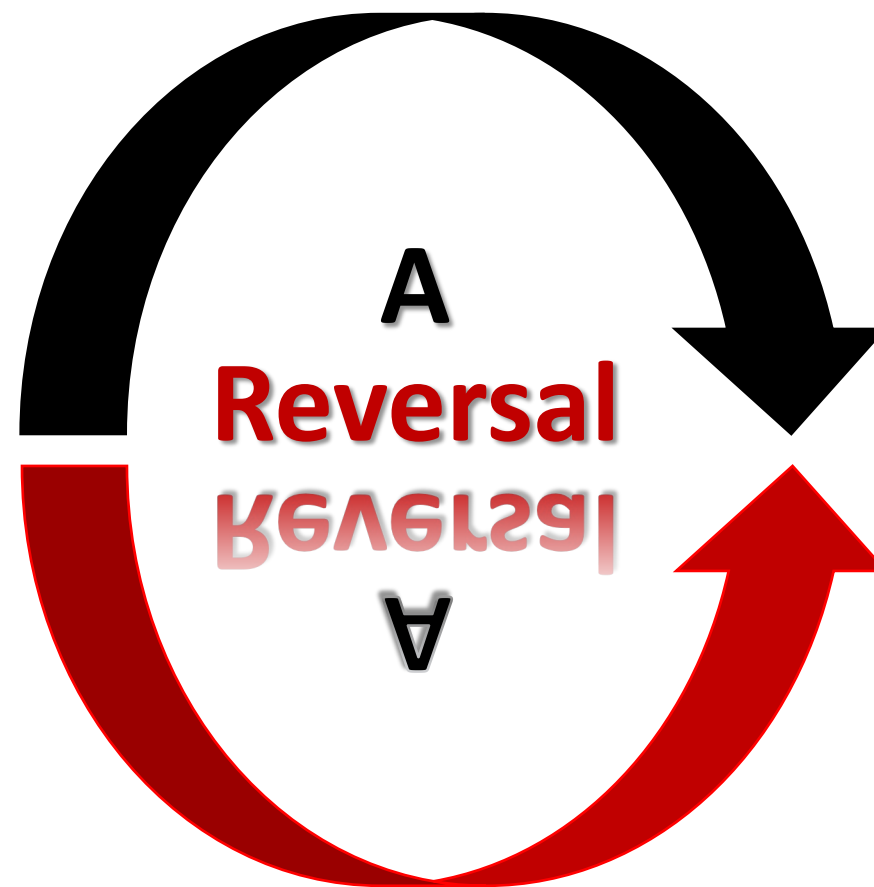
"It was turned around..."

*"It was the opposite of what
was expected..."*

*"It is topsy-turvy with things being
turned on their heads..."*

*"It is a miraculous event (in a bad
way) that will wind up being
miraculous in a good way"*

When things in this world go disastrous
for believers, it is helpful to remember
that this might simply be v'NaHaFoch Hu



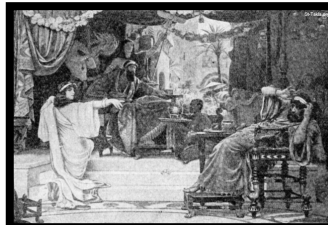
Be careful about building "gallows" for others

Haman Is Judged (Esther 7:1-10)

1 Now the king and Haman came to drink *wine* with Esther the queen.
2 And the king said to Esther on the second day also as they drank their wine at the banquet, "What is your request, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your wish? Up to half of the kingdom it shall be done."
3 Then Queen Esther replied, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me as my request, and my people as my wish;
4 for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, killed, and eliminated. Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have kept silent, because the distress would not be sufficient *reason* to burden the king."
5 Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would presume to do such a *thing*?"
6 And Esther said, "A foe and an enemy is this wicked Haman!" Then Haman became terrified before the king and queen.
7 The king then got up in his anger from drinking wine *and went* into the palace garden; but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm had been determined against him by the king.
8 Now when the king returned from the palace garden into the place where they had been drinking wine, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, "Will he even assault the queen with me in the house?" As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.
9 Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs who *stood* before the king, said, "Indeed, behold, the wooden *gallows* standing at Haman's house fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai who spoke good in behalf of the king!" And the king said, "Hang him on it."
10 So they hanged Haman on the wooden *gallows* which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the king's anger subsided.



Esther's request to the King saved her



Esther could have spoken to the King in private, but she chose to have the evil conspirator, Haman attending in person as well.

Ancient Persians were known for their consumption of alcohol (Esther 1:7-8).

Throughout the Bible, wine symbolizes joy as well as blood

Once again, the King asks Esther's request be made known for a third time.

The King recognizes her as "Queen Esther" which recognizes Esther's authority

Esther requests that the King spare her life (and that of her people) if she has pleased him and obtained his approval

Esther says that she and her people have been "sold" beyond slavery to death (Is 50:1, 52:3; Gen 37:28; Lev 25:42; Judges 2:14, 3:8, 4:2, 10:7; Lk 12:6)

Initially, Esther does not petition for all of the Jews, but she makes it personal about her life

Esther learned that the palace would not be a safe haven for her from Mordecai (Esther 4:13)

Haman is characterized with three descriptors:
- Adversary (1 Pet 5:8)
- Enemy (Mt 13:39; Acts 13:10)
- Evil (Mt 5:37, 6:13; 1 Jn 2:13)

In the same way, Satan is looking to condemn each believer of God (Zechariah 3:1-2; 2 Corinthians 2:11)

"Harbona" means "his destruction/sword"

As the enraged King took a walk in his garden, the evil one begged the queen for his life.

The evil one needed an intercessor for his life as the queen had mediated for her people.

The Jews Restored (Esther 8:1-8)

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



2 Then the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.



3 Then Esther spoke again to the king, fell at his feet, wept, and pleaded for his compassion to avert the evil *scheme* of Haman the Agagite and his plot which he had devised against the Jews.

4 And the king extended the golden scepter to Esther. So Esther got up and stood before the king.



5 Then she said, "If it pleases the king and if I have found favor before him, and the matter *seems* proper to the king and I am pleasing in his sight, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to eliminate the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.

6 For how can I endure to see the disaster which will happen to my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"

7 So King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Behold, I have given the house of Haman to Esther, and they have hanged him on the wooden *gallows* because he had reached out with his hand against the Jews.

8 Now you write to the Jews as you see fit, in the king's name, and seal *it* with the king's signet ring; for a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's signet ring may not be revoked."

Esther revealed her association with Mordecai who had saved King Ahasuerus from assassination.

The entire house of Haman (thought to be immense) was given to Esther.

The identity of Haman was defined by his enmity against the Jews. This is similar to Satan, the accuser.

King transferred his authority to Mordecai via his signet ring while Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman

Esther fell at the King's feet, wept and begged for the salvation of her people.

Haman had proclaimed an edict that the Jews could be killed on the 13th day of the 12th month.

The use of the scepter reveals that the King had power over Esther's life, and the King actively chose to extend grace to her.

Conditions for the Request to the King:

- The Request Pleases the King
- The Requestor finds favor with the King
- The matter seems proper to the King
- The Requestor is pleasing in the King's sight

Israel was saved because of Esther (their mediator) and not on the intrinsic worth of Israel themselves.

Although the King's law could not be revoked, another law could overwrite the existing law.

The King gave Mordecai the authority to send his own edict in the King's name.

A New Law for the Jews (Esther 8:9-17)

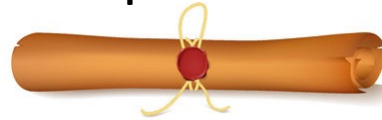
⁹ So the king's scribes were summoned at that time in the **third month (that is, the month Sivan)**, on the twenty-third day; and it was written in accordance with everything that Mordecai commanded the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and **the officials of the provinces which *extended* from India to Cush, 127 provinces, to every province according to its script, and to every people according to their language, as well as to the Jews according to their script and their language.**

The Longest Verse in the Bible

¹⁰ He wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horses, riding on royal relay horses, offspring of racing mares.

¹¹ In the letters **the king granted the Jews who were in each and every city *the right* to assemble and to defend their lives, to destroy, kill, and eliminate the entire army of *any* people or province which was going to attack them, *including* children and women, and to plunder their spoils,**

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



¹³ A copy of the edict to be issued as law in each and every province was published to all the peoples, **so that the Jews would be ready for this day to avenge themselves on their enemies.**

¹⁴ The couriers, hurrying and speeded by the king's command, left, riding on the royal relay horses; and the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa.

¹⁵ **Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in a royal robe of violet and white, with a large crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced.**

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

¹⁷ In each and every province and in each and every city, wherever the king's commandment and his decree arrived, **there was joy and jubilation for the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many among the peoples of the land became Jews, because the dread of the Jews had fallen on them.**

Mordecai was covered with three types of clothing:

1. Purple (royal) and White (pure) clothing
2. Great Golden Crown (authority)
3. Purple (royal) robe of fine linen (purity)

The "Sivan" time frame of May/June would have been during the time of the Pentecost Feast.

The Law from Mt. Sinai was given at the time of the Pentecost as well as the Holy Spirit (Acts 2)

Mordecai authored the letter from the King that went in each language to those in the extensive territory.

Mordecai wrote with the King's authority as carriers that conveyed the salvation of Mordecai's people throughout the world.

Although Scripture was written by ~40 men, the words carry the authority of the Lord and King.

This "counter" law seems to use the same language as Haman (Esther 3:13) except this law would be used in the defense of the Jews.

The old law could not be revoked; however, a new law/covenant/testimony, could be established in the king's name.

A New Law for the Jews (Esther 9:1-12)

¹ Now in the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar), on the thirteenth day, when the king's command and edict were to be put into effect, **on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, it turned out to the contrary so that the Jews themselves gained mastery over those who hated them.**

² The Jews assembled in their cities throughout the provinces of King Ahasuerus to attack those who sought to harm them; and no one could stand against them, because the dread of them had fallen on all the peoples.

³ Even all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and those who were doing the king's business were supporting the Jews, because the dread of Mordecai had fallen on them.

⁴ For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and the news about him spread throughout the provinces; **for the man Mordecai became greater and greater.**

⁵ **So the Jews struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying; and they did as they pleased to those who hated them.**

⁶ At the citadel in Susa the Jews killed and eliminated five hundred men,

⁷ and they killed Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,

⁸ Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,

⁹ Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha,

¹⁰ the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Jews' enemy; but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

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

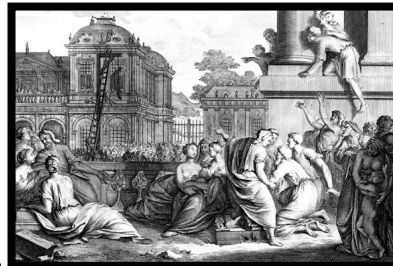
¹² And the king said to Queen Esther, **"The Jews have killed and eliminated five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman at the citadel in Susa. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces! Now what is your request? It shall also be granted you. And what is your further wish? It shall also be done."**

When the enemies of God's people expected to rout them, the opposite happened and God's people were victorious (as it had been with Haman and Mordecai on an individual level).

With a Jewish Queen (Esther) and Jewish Prime Minister (Mordecai), it would have been expedient to convert to Judaism at the time.

Anyone who hated God's people paid the penalty of death.

In Persia's capital city of Susa, 500 anti-Semitic men were executed.



The Sons of Haman		Storyline (uninspired) <i>Interest in the Law from man's self-pity is given by a revered weapon who is generous to the impoverished who draws water as a warrior who is strong bold dignified and pure.</i>
Name	Meanings	
1. Parshandatha	"Interpreter of the Law/Curious self"	
2. Dalphon	"Crafty/House of Caves/Self Pity"	
3. Aspatha	"Given by a sacred horse"	
4. Poratha	"Fruitful/Given by Fate/Generous self"	
5. Adalia	"One that draws water/poverty/death"	
6. Aridatha	"Given by the mountain/warrior/strong self"	
7. Parmashta	"Strong fisted/a yearling bull/preminent"	
8. Arisai	"Lion like/Bold"	
9. Aridai	"The Strong/Dignified"	
10. Vaizatha	"Given of the Best One/Son of the Atmosphere/Pure"	

The King continued to give graciously

The killings were not out of greed and those killed were not plundered

King Saul had been told to kill the Amalekites from Agag, while being forbidden to take spoil. (1 Samuel 15:8)

The Feast of Purim Begins (Esther 9:20-32)

²⁰ Then Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, *both* near and far,

²¹ obliging them to celebrate the fourteenth day of the month

Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same month, annually,

²² because on those days the Jews rid themselves of their enemies, and *it was a month which was turned for them from grief into joy, and from mourning into a holiday; that they were to make them days of feasting and rejoicing, and sending portions of food to one another, and gifts to the poor.*

²³ So the Jews undertook what they had started to do, and what Mordecai had written to them.

²⁴ For Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the adversary of all the Jews, had schemed against the Jews to eliminate them, and had cast Pur, that is the lot, to disturb them and eliminate them.

²⁵ But when it came to the king's attention, he commanded by letter that his wicked scheme which he had devised against the Jews was to return on his own head, and that he and his sons were to be hanged on the wooden *gallows*.

²⁶ Therefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. And because of the instructions in this letter, both what they had seen in this regard and what had happened to them,

²⁷ the Jews established and made a custom for themselves, their descendants, and for all those who allied themselves with them, so that they would not fail to celebrate these two days according to their regulation and according to their appointed time annually.

²⁸ So these days were to be remembered and celebrated throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and **these days of Purim were not to be neglected by the Jews, or their memory fade from their descendants.**

²⁹ Then Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim.

³⁰ He sent letters to all the Jews, to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, *namely, words of peace and truth,*

³¹ to establish these days of Purim at their appointed times, just as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had established for them, and just as they had established for themselves and for their descendants, *with instructions for their times of fasting and their mourning.*

³² The command of Esther established these customs for Purim, and it was written in the book.

Kreplach



Hamantaschen



On the 13th, the Jews should fast and lament the persecution of the Jews, but on the 14th and 15th they are to celebrate.



Mordecai may have been the author of Esther, and he wrote letters to establish the annual celebration of Purim on either one of the two days (14 or 15) of Adar.

Those who celebrated on 14th were outside of Susa while the inhabitants of Susa celebrated on the 15th. (Esther 9:17-18)

Israel was told to celebrate this as a time when their sorrow was turned to joy just as Jesus' death on the cross was victorious and losing one's life results in the person gaining eternal life.

Haman had schemed against God's people and cast "Pur" which means lot. This is the origin of the name of Purim.

Just as Antiochus Epiphanes, Adolph Hitler, and the future anti-Christ attempt to terminate Israel from the world, it will be a surprising time of victory.

Esther joined with Mordecai in writing another letter regarding the Feast of Purim which was characterized by the two words of "peace" and "truth".

Modern Day Purim

Similarities have been identified between Purim in the Nuremburg war crime trials.

In the Book of Esther, Haman's ten sons were hanged (Esther 9:13); in 1946, ten of Hitler's top associates were put to death by hanging for their war crimes (including the crime of murdering 6 million Jews).

It is also interesting that, in the traditional text of the Megillah (Book of Esther), in the list of the names of Haman's sons, the letters Tav (in the first name), Shin (in the seventh name) and Zayin (in the tenth name) are written in smaller letters than the rest. The numerical value of Tav-Shin-Zayin is 707, and these ten men were hanged in the Jewish year of 5707 (the thousands digit is routinely skipped when writing Jewish years; there are no numbers for thousands in Hebrew numbering). They were not hanged on Purim, though – they were hanged on Hashanah Rabbah.



Another echo of Purim is found in the Soviet Union a few years later. In early 1953, Stalin was planning to deport most of the Jews in the Soviet Union to Siberia. However, just before his plans came to fruition, he suffered a stroke and died a few days later. He suffered that stroke on the night of March 1, 1953; the night after Purim (note: Jewish days end at sunset, so March 1 appears on the calendar as Purim). The plan to deport the Jews to Siberia was not carried out.

A Happy Ending (Esther 10:1-3)

¹ Now King Ahasuerus imposed a tax on the land and the coastlands of the sea.

² And every accomplishment of his authority and power, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai with which the king honored him, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia?

³ For Mordecai the Jew was second *only* to King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews and in favor with his many kinsmen, one who sought the good of his people and one who spoke for the welfare of his entire nation.



King Ahasuerus was a powerful King who had been influenced by a submissive wife – the power of humility (Psalm 45:10-11).

These are not the Chronicles of Scripture, but instead these are the court records referenced throughout the book (Esther 2:23, 6:1)

Just as Joseph was second in command in Egypt, Mordecai was elevated to being second only to the King, and he used his position for the welfare of God's people.

The book of Esther concludes with the greatness of Mordecai instead of Esther



Purim Traditions

Mishloach Manot

Mishloach manot
Means "sending of portions"
which results in gifts of food
or drink (Purim Baskets)
being sent to family and
friends on Purim day.

Matanot l'Evyonim

Matanot l'Evyonim
means "Gifts to the Poor"
as Jewish families are
encouraged to assist at
least two needy families
on Purim day

Lehitc'hapes

For more than 500 years, Jews (especially children) have dressed up in costumes (usually related to the story of Esther – Xerxes, Mordecai, Haman). One reason for this custom is to avoid embarrassing the poor who are collecting money on Purim since everyone is in costume, those in poverty are not as easily identified.

Taanit Esther

The "Fast of Esther" (Taanit Esther) is observed the day before Purim (or on the Thursday before, when Purim is on Sunday) where Esther's fast is commemorated along with her prayer for God save His people. On the afternoon of Taanit Esther, it is customary to give three coins, each one to be half of the local denomination (such as half dollars, half shekels etc.), to charity.

Zera ("Seed")

Many Jewish families eat foods with Seeds on Purim to recall the faithfulness of Esther (as well as Daniel) who lived on seeds while in royal surroundings to avoid eating anything non-kosher

Gragger

The origin of the "Gragger" may have been captured by Rabbi David Abudraham (14th century Spain) who documented that an early Purim custom was for children to write Haman's name (or drawing a picture of him) on pieces of wood or stones and then "bang" them together to "erase" Haman's representation.

Purim Shpiels

Purim shpiels are performances (often casual) that may include drama, song, dance, and lots of jokes. In weeks leading up to Purim, Jewish "shpielers" often practice their play and then go door-to-door to perform their shtick and collect funds for various causes.

Purim Jester

Some Jewish communities appoint "Purim jester" to provide humor and jollity during the Purim meal. This jester may recite something known as "Purim Torah" which mixes absurdity and scholarship into a witty commentary on the Talmud (Jewish commentary consisting of the Mishnah & Gemara).

Mashvarta

In the time of Jesus, Jewish children had a dangerous game called a mashvarta where a bonfire would be lit inside a pit while the children would jump over the fire.