

# ESTHER

## CHAPTER 1A (Addition A)

*In the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the reign of King<sup>1</sup> Xerxes<sup>2</sup> the Great, on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month of Adar Nisan, (which is Dystros Xanthicus),<sup>3</sup> Mordecai, son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, had a dream. **2** He was a Judean residing in the city of Susa, a prominent man who served at the king's court,<sup>4</sup> **3** and one of the exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babel, had taken from Jerusalem<sup>5</sup> with Jeconiah, king of Judah.*

**4** *This was his dream:*

*And behold! Shouts<sup>6</sup> and a cry of tumult, thunder and earthquake, and confusion upon the earth. **5** Two great<sup>7</sup> dragons came on, both poised for combat. They uttered a mighty<sup>8</sup> cry, **6** and everything was troubled at the sound of their cry and every nation prepared for war, to fight<sup>9</sup> against the nation of the righteous.<sup>10</sup>*

**7** *Behold! It was a testimony to all the peoples. A day of darkness and gloom. Tribulation and distress, evil and great confusion, lay upon the earth.<sup>11</sup> **8** The whole race of the righteous were dismayed with fear of the evils to come upon them, and were at the point of destruction.<sup>12</sup> **9** Then they<sup>13</sup> cried out to God,<sup>14</sup> and from<sup>15</sup> the sound of their cry, there appeared to come forth a great river, a flood of water from a little spring. **10** Light, and<sup>16</sup> the sun broke forth; the lowly<sup>17</sup> were exalted and they devoured<sup>18</sup> the nobles.*

**11** *Then when Mordecai awoke from his sleep, having seen this dream and what God intended to do,<sup>19</sup> and he kept it<sup>20</sup> in his mind, and tried in every way, until nightfall, to understand its meaning.<sup>21</sup>*

**12** *Its interpretation would become clear to him on the day which<sup>22</sup> Mordecai lodged<sup>23</sup> at the king's<sup>24</sup> courtyard with Bigthan and Teresh,<sup>25</sup> two eunuchs of the king who were court guards.<sup>26</sup> **13** And He both overheard them plotting and investigated their plans, and discovered that they were preparing to lay hands on<sup>27</sup> King Xerxes to kill him. So after thinking about it, he informed the king about them. **14** And the king had the two eunuchs questioned and found Mordecai's words to be true, and, when they<sup>28</sup> confessed, they were put to death. **15** Then the king had these things recorded, and Mordecai put them into writing<sup>29</sup> so that these things would be*

<sup>1</sup> [Est1A:1] LXX(B), OL / others omit "king"

<sup>2</sup> [all instances of this name] MT / AT "Assueros" / LXX, Eth, Josephus, Midrash, Josippon "Artaxerxes" / LXX(Luc), Vul "Asuerus"

<sup>3</sup> [Est1A:1] LXX / AT adds

<sup>4</sup> [Est1A:2] AT, OL omits "He was a Judean...who served at the king's court" (other details from this verse are omitted in AT, but have been supplied from both the LXX and Hebrew text of 2:5-6)

<sup>5</sup> [Est1A:3] AT omits "from Jerusalem"

<sup>6</sup> [Est1A:4] AT "A shout" / OL omits "And behold!"

<sup>7</sup> [Est1A:5] AT omits "great"

<sup>8</sup> [Est1A:5] AT omits "mighty"

<sup>9</sup> [Est1A:6] AT moves "every nation prepared to fight" (omitting "for war") after the line ending with "upon the earth"

<sup>10</sup> [Est1A:6] AT omits "against the nation of the righteous"

<sup>11</sup> [Est1A:7] AT "...and gloom and chaos of war!"

<sup>12</sup> [Est1A:8] AT omits "The whole race...destruction." / OL has only "prepared for war. And they waged a great battle between them and tried to subdue on another. And the people assembled themselves on the dark and evil day, and there was great confusion among the inhabitants of the earth. And they feared defeat."

<sup>13</sup> [Est1A:9] AT "And we"

<sup>14</sup> [Est1A:9] AT "to the Lord"

<sup>15</sup> [Est1A:9] AT "and because of"

<sup>16</sup> [Est1A:10] AT omits "and"

<sup>17</sup> [Est1A:10] AT "rivers"

<sup>18</sup> [Est1A:10] AT "swallowed"

<sup>19</sup> [Est1A:11] AT "he pondered what the dream meant and what the Mighty One was preparing to do"

<sup>20</sup> [Est1A:11] AT "and his dream was hidden"

<sup>21</sup> [Est1A:11] OL "And Mordecai, who had seen the dream, stood up and said, 'What does God intend to do?'" And this vision was kept in his heart until it was revealed." & omits verses 12-17.

<sup>22</sup> [Est1A:12] LXX / AT adds

<sup>23</sup> [Est1A:12] LXX / AT "napped"

<sup>24</sup> [Est1A:12] LXX / AT adds

<sup>25</sup> [Est1A:12] Emendation based on MT / LXX "Gabatha and Tharra" / AT "Astaos and Thedeutes"

<sup>26</sup> [Est1A:12] LXX / AT omits "who were court guards"

<sup>27</sup> [Est1A:13] AT "he overheard their words and their schemes as they were plotting to assault"

<sup>28</sup> [Est1A:14] AT "when the eunuchs"

<sup>29</sup> [Est1A:15] AT "And Mordecai was written about in the book of the king"

*remembered.*<sup>1</sup> **16** And the king ordered Mordecai to serve at the court of the king and conspicuously guard every door.<sup>2</sup> And he assigned these things to him.<sup>3</sup>

**17** However, Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite,<sup>4</sup> who was in high honor with the king, sought to harm Mordecai and all<sup>5</sup> his people because of what he had said to the king concerning<sup>6</sup> the king's two eunuchs,<sup>7</sup> because they had been executed.<sup>8,9</sup>

## CHAPTER 1B

And it came to pass after these things, during the reign of Xerxes (this was the Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces from Hodu to Cush),<sup>10</sup> **2** in those days<sup>11</sup> while he<sup>12</sup> was occupying the royal throne in the stronghold<sup>13</sup> of Susa, **3** in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of his reign,<sup>14</sup> he presided over a feast<sup>15</sup> for all his officers and ministers: the officers of the Persian and Median aristocracy, the nobles, and the governors of the provinces. And after these things,<sup>16</sup> **4** For as many as 180 days, he displayed the glorious riches of his kingdom and the resplendent wealth of his royal estate.<sup>17</sup>

**5** At the end of this time of the marriage,<sup>18</sup> the king gave a seven<sup>19</sup> day long feast in the garden court of the royal palace for all the people, great and small,<sup>20</sup> who were in the stronghold<sup>21</sup> of Susa.<sup>22</sup> **6** There were white cotton draperies and violet hangings,<sup>23</sup> held by cords of crimson byssus from gold and<sup>24</sup> silver rings on marble pillars and other stones.<sup>25</sup> Gold and silver<sup>26</sup> couches were on the pavement, which was of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl, and colored stones.<sup>27</sup> And there were gossamer throws in many colors, embroidered with encircled roses.<sup>28</sup> **7** Liquor was served in golden and silver cups (each vessel differing from the other),<sup>29</sup> and a miniature cup made of ruby was on display that was worth 30,000 talents,<sup>30</sup> and the royal wine flowed in abundance, as befitted the king's munificence.<sup>31</sup> **8** By ordinance of the king the drinking was unstinted,<sup>32</sup> for he had instructed all the stewards of his household<sup>33</sup> to comply with the good pleasure of everyone.<sup>34</sup> He also sent throughout the country, and proclaimed to the people that they might give up their work and rest and celebrate for many days in honor of his reign.<sup>35</sup>

**9** Queen Vashti also gave a feast for the women inside the royal palace of King Xerxes.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Est1A:15] LXX / AT adds

<sup>2</sup> [Est1A:16] LXX / AT adds

<sup>3</sup> [Est1A:16] AT / LXX "And he rewarded him for his actions."

<sup>4</sup> [Est1A:16] LXX (lit. "Bugaean" which always translates from Hebrew "Agagite") / AT "Makedonian"

<sup>5</sup> [Est1A:17] LXX / AT adds

<sup>6</sup> [Est1A:17] LXX / AT adds

<sup>7</sup> [Est1A:17] LXX / AT "the eunuchs"

<sup>8</sup> [Est1A:17] LXX / AT, Vul adds

<sup>9</sup> All sections in italics designate portions that are not present in the Masoretic Hebrew text, but are found in both Greek translations (AT & LXX). All of these sections are also found in Josephus, with an exception of the Mordecai dream sequences (Additions A & F).

<sup>10</sup> [Est1B:1] MT, AT, OL, Josephus / LXX omits "to Cush"

<sup>11</sup> [Est1B:1] MT, LXX / AT omits "in those days"

<sup>12</sup> [Est1B:1] MT / LXX "King Xerxes" / AT "Xerxes"

<sup>13</sup> [Est1B:2] MT, OL / LXX "city"

<sup>14</sup> [Est1B:3] MT, LXX / AT omits "in the 3rd year of his reign"

<sup>15</sup> [Est1B:3] MT, LXX / AT "wine party"

<sup>16</sup> [Est1B:5] MT, AT / LXX adds

<sup>17</sup> [Est1B:5] MT, LXX / AT "displayed the the wealth of the king's glory and the honor which he boasted"

<sup>18</sup> [Est1B:5] MT / LXX adds "of the marriage" / AT adds "of the deliverance"

<sup>19</sup> [Est1B:5] MT, AT, Josephus / LXX "six"

<sup>20</sup> [Est1B:5] MT, AT / LXX omits "great and small"

<sup>21</sup> [Est1B:5] MT / LXX, AT "city" / Josephus omits altogether

<sup>22</sup> [Est1B:5] MT, AT, Josephus / LXX omits "of Susa"

<sup>23</sup> [Est1B:6] MT / LXX "It had been decorated with *draperies* of fine linen, and cotton hangings" / AT "And there were linen and cotton draperies, with lavender and scarlet embroidered in flowers"

<sup>24</sup> [Est1B:6] MT, AT, Luc / LXX adds

<sup>25</sup> [Est1B:6] MT / LXX adds / AT instead adds "and gilded with gold" / Luc instead adds "and gilded"

<sup>26</sup> [Est1B:6] MT, LXX / AT omits "and silver"

<sup>27</sup> [Est1B:6] MT / LXX "pavement, which was of emerald, mother-of-pearl, and marble" / AT "pavement, which was of emerald"

<sup>28</sup> [Est1B:6] MT / LXX adds / AT only adds "and encircled with roses"

<sup>29</sup> [Est1B:7] MT / LXX "The cups were made of gold and silver" / AT "And each of the golden cups were different"

<sup>30</sup> [Est1B:7] MT, AT / LXX adds

<sup>31</sup> [Est1B:7] MT / LXX "and the wine was abundant and sweet, which the king himself drank" / AT "and the wine was royal, which the king drinks."

<sup>32</sup> [Est1B:8] MT, AT / LXX "stinted"

<sup>33</sup> [Est1B:7] MT / LXX, AT, Josephus omit "of his household"

<sup>34</sup> [Est1A:7] MT, AT / LXX "of he and his men" // Josephus reads here "...of the king, his servants were not to force them to drink by bringing them wine continually, but to permit each of the banqueters to use his own judgment in satisfying his pleasures."

<sup>35</sup> [Est1A:8] Josephus adds

<sup>36</sup> [Est1A:7] MT, LXX / AT "inside the royal palace of the king" / Josephus "inside her palace"

**10** On the seventh day, when the king's heart<sup>1</sup> was merry with wine, he instructed Mehuman,<sup>2</sup> Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carkas,<sup>3</sup> the seven eunuchs who attended King Xerxes,<sup>4</sup> **11** to bring Queen Vashti<sup>5</sup> into his presence wearing the royal crown,<sup>6</sup> that he might display her beauty to the populace and the officials,<sup>7</sup> for she was lovely to behold.<sup>8</sup> **12** But Queen<sup>9</sup> Vashti<sup>10</sup> refused to come at the royal order issued through the hand of<sup>11</sup> the eunuchs. Therefore the king's<sup>12</sup> wrath flared up, and he burned with fury.

**13** Then he conferred with the wise men<sup>13</sup> versed in the law, because the king's business was conducted in general consultation with lawyers and jurists.<sup>14</sup> **14** And he summoned Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memucan,<sup>15</sup> the seven<sup>16</sup> Persian and Median officials who were in the king's personal service and held first rank in the realm,<sup>17</sup> **15** and asked them, "According to the law, what is to be done with Queen Vashti for disobeying the order of King Xerxes issued through the eunuchs?"<sup>18</sup>

**16** In the presence of the king and of the officials, Memucan<sup>19</sup> answered, "Queen Vashti has not wronged the king alone, but all the officials of the Persians and Medes<sup>20</sup> and the populace throughout the provinces of King Xerxes.<sup>21</sup> **17** For the queen's conduct will become known to all the women, and they will look with disdain upon their husbands when it is reported,<sup>22</sup> 'King Xerxes commanded that Queen Vashti be ushered into his presence, but she would not come!'<sup>23</sup> **18** This very day the Persian and Median ladies who hear of the queen's conduct will rebel against all the royal officials, with corresponding disdain and rancor.<sup>24</sup> **19** If it please the king and is acceptable to his thinking,<sup>25</sup> let an irrevocable<sup>26</sup> royal decree be issued by him and inscribed among the laws of the Persians and Medes,<sup>27</sup> forbidding Vashti<sup>28</sup> to come into the presence of King Xerxes<sup>29</sup> and authorizing the king to give her royal dignity to one more worthy than she. **20** When the decree which the king will issue is published throughout his realm,<sup>30</sup> vast as it is,<sup>31</sup> this is the manner in which all women shall honor their husbands, from the greatest to the least."<sup>32</sup>

**21** This proposal found acceptance with the king and the officials, and the king acted on the advice of Memucan.<sup>33</sup> And so it was decided to send Vashti away, and to give her high position to another woman.<sup>34</sup> **22** He sent letters to all the royal provinces, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own

<sup>1</sup> [Est1A:10] MT / LXX "when he" / AT "when the king"

<sup>2</sup> [Est1A:10] MT / LXX "Haman" (supported by Targum)

<sup>3</sup> [Est1A:10] LXX "Bazan, Tharra, Barazi, Zatholtha, Abataza, Tharaba"

<sup>4</sup> [Est1A:10] MT, LXX (supported by Josephus) / AT "he instructed his servants"

<sup>5</sup> [Est1A:11] MT, AT / LXX "bring the queen"

<sup>6</sup> [Est1A:11] MT / LXX "to bring the queen to him, to enthrone her, and to place the crown on her" / AT "to bring Queen Vashti into the assembled banquet, wearing her royal crown"

<sup>7</sup> [Est1A:11] MT / LXX "that he might display her to the officials, and her beauty to the populace" / AT "before his army"

<sup>8</sup> [Est1A:11] MT / LXX omits "to behold" / AT omits "for she was lovely to behold"

<sup>9</sup> [Est1A:12] MT, LXX / AT omits "Queen" / (Josephus has only "she")

<sup>10</sup> [Est1A:12] Josephus adds here "in observance of the laws of the Persians, which forbid their women to be seen by strangers"

<sup>11</sup> [Est1A:12] MT, LXX, Josephus / AT adds

<sup>12</sup> [Est1A:12] MT, (LXX similar) / AT "Now when the news reached the king that Vashti denied his will, his"

<sup>13</sup> [Est1A:13] MT, AT / LXX "with his friends"

<sup>14</sup> [Est1A:13] MT / AT "Then...versed in the law and justice what to do with the queen, because she had been unwilling to do the will of the king." / LXX "Then he said to his friends, 'This is how Vashti spoke. Therefore give your ruling and judgment on this.'"

<sup>15</sup> [Est1A:14] LXX "summoned Arkesaeus, and Sarsathaeus, and Malisear" / AT (see below)

<sup>16</sup> [Est1A:14] MT / LXX, Luc omits "seven" / AT (see below)

<sup>17</sup> [Est1A:14] MT / LXX "And...Madean officials who were close to the king and seated first by the king, came to him." / AT "And the Parsean and Madean officials, and those who see the face of the king, and those seated among royalty came to him."

<sup>18</sup> [Est1A:15] MT / LXX "and they reported to him, according to the law, what must be done with Queen Vashti for disobeying the things issued by the king through the eunuchs."

<sup>19</sup> [Est1A:16] MT / LXX, some Josephus "Mouchaios" / AT "Bougaaios" / other Josephus "Amouchaios"

<sup>20</sup> [Est1A:16] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>21</sup> [Est1A:16] MT / LXX "officials and governors of the king" / AT "officials of the Persians and Medians and to all the populace"

<sup>22</sup> [Est1A:17] MT / LXX omits "For the queen's...reported" and instead has "(For he had reported to them the queen's words and how she had defied the king.)"

<sup>23</sup> [Est1A:17] MT / AT omits "For the queen's...not come!" and instead has "because she ignored the ordinance of the king" / LXX omits "King Xerxes...not come!" and instead has "Therefore, just as she defied King Xerxes"

<sup>24</sup> [Est1A:18] MT / LXX (supported by Josephus) "This very day, the ladies of the royal officials of Persians and Medians who hear what was said by her to the king, will, in the same way, dare to dishonor their husbands." / AT omits altogether

<sup>25</sup> [Est1A:19] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>26</sup> [Est1A:19] MT, LXX / AT omits "irrevocable"

<sup>27</sup> [Est1A:19] MT, LXX / AT "and inscribed to all the lands and to all the nations"

<sup>28</sup> [Est1A:19] MT, AT / LXX "the queen"

<sup>29</sup> [Est1A:19] MT / LXX "forbidding...of him" / AT "making it know that Vashti rejected the word of the king."

<sup>30</sup> [Est1A:20] MT, LXX(similar) / AT "Thus, let it be seen that she is obeying the voice of the king, and he will do good for all the kingdoms."

<sup>31</sup> [Est1A:20] MT / LXX, AT omit "vast as it is"

<sup>32</sup> [Est1A:20] MT / LXX, AT "from the poor to the rich."

<sup>33</sup> [Est1A:21] MT, LXX / AT "with the king's heart, and he acted readily on this advice."

<sup>34</sup> [Est1A:21] Josephus adds

language,<sup>1</sup> to the effect that every man should be lord in his own home, and speak according to the language of his own people.

## CHAPTER 2

After this, when King Xerxes' wrath<sup>2</sup> had cooled, he no longer<sup>3</sup> thought over what Vashti had done and what had been decreed against her.<sup>4</sup>

2 Then the king's personal attendants suggested, "Let beautiful chaste<sup>5</sup> young virgins be sought for the king. king. 3 And let the king appoint commissaries in all the provinces of his realm to bring together all the beautiful chaste<sup>6</sup> young virgins to the harem in the stronghold<sup>7</sup> of Susa. And let them be entrusted<sup>8</sup> Under the care of the the royal eunuch Hegai,<sup>9</sup> custodian of the women, let cosmetics and other attendance<sup>10</sup> be given them. 4 Then the girl<sup>11</sup> who pleases the king shall be queen in place of Vashti."

This suggestion pleased the king, and he acted accordingly.<sup>12</sup>

5 In the stronghold of Susa,<sup>13</sup> there was a certain Judean named Mordecai, son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite. 6 He had been exiled from Jerusalem along with the captives who had been deported with Jeconiah, king of Judah,<sup>14</sup> whom Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babel, had deported.

7 And he was foster father to his cousin Hadassah the daughter of Abihail, that is, Esther,<sup>15</sup> for she had lost both father and mother.<sup>16</sup> The girl<sup>17</sup> was beautifully formed and lovely to behold.<sup>18</sup> On the death of her father and mother, Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter.<sup>19</sup>

8 So it came to pass, when the king's order and decree had been obeyed and<sup>20</sup> many girls had been brought together to the stronghold<sup>21</sup> of Susa under the care of Hegai, that<sup>22</sup> Esther was also brought in to the royal palace under the care of<sup>23</sup> Hegai,<sup>24</sup> custodian of the women. 9 The girl pleased him and won his personal favor and compassion.<sup>25</sup> So he promptly furnished her with cosmetics and provisions. Then picking out seven maids for her from the royal<sup>26</sup> palace, he transferred both her and her maids to the best place in the harem.<sup>27</sup>

10 Esther did not reveal her nationality or family, for Mordecai had commanded her not to do so. 11 Day by day Mordecai would walk about in front of the court of the harem, to learn how Esther was faring and what was to become of her.

12 Each girl, before going in turn to visit King Xerxes,<sup>28</sup> was required to complete the twelve months' of preparation that had been decreed for the women<sup>29</sup> who were 400 in number.<sup>30</sup> Of this period of beautifying

<sup>1</sup> [Est1A:22] MT / LXX "sent word throughout all his kingdom, to every provinces, according to its own language"

<sup>2</sup> [Est2:1] MT (supported by AT) / LXX "when the king's wrath"

<sup>3</sup> [Est2:1] MT / LXX adds

<sup>4</sup> [Est2:1] MT / LXX "had said, and how he condemned her." / AT replaces "After this...her." with "And so the tradition was established *that told* about Vashti and what she had done to King Xerxes."

<sup>5</sup> [Est2:2] MT, AT / LXX adds (AT reads "Let us seek beautiful young virgins" & omits "for the king")

<sup>6</sup> [Est2:3] MT / LXX adds

<sup>7</sup> [Est2:3] MT / LXX "city"

<sup>8</sup> [Est2:3] MT / LXX (supported by AT) adds

<sup>9</sup> [Est2:3] MT / AT "Gogaios" / LXX omits altogether

<sup>10</sup> [Est2:7] MT / LXX adds / AT replaced "And let the king...given them." with "And let them be given to be placed under the charge of Gogaios the eunuch, the custodian of the women."

<sup>11</sup> [Est2:4] MT, AT / LXX "woman"

<sup>12</sup> [Est2:4] MT, LXX / AT replaced "This suggestion...accordingly" with "And they readily acted accordingly."

<sup>13</sup> [Est2:5] MT, LXX, AT / Josephus "In Babel"

<sup>14</sup> [Est2:6] MT / LXX omits "along with...king of Judah" / AT omits "He had been...deported."

<sup>15</sup> [Est2:7] MT / LXX "to the daughter of Abihail, and her name was Esther" (LXX always translates "Abihail" to "Ameinadab", and OL always translates to "Abiel") / all other versions, except for the Vulgate omit the name "Hadassah"

<sup>16</sup> [Est2:7] AT replaces "was foster...mother" with "And he was faithfully bringing up Esther, a daughter of the brother of his father."

<sup>17</sup> [Est2:7] MT, LXX / AT "child"

<sup>18</sup> [Est2:7] MT, AT / LXX omits "and lovely to behold"

<sup>19</sup> [Est2:7] some "own wife" / AT omits "On the death of her...own (daughter)." / Josephus would understand her to be his niece

<sup>20</sup> [Est2:8] MT / LXX "when the king's order was heard"

<sup>21</sup> [Est2:8] MT / LXX "city"

<sup>22</sup> [Est2:8] AT replaces "So it came...Hegai, that" with only "And"

<sup>23</sup> [Est2:8] MT, AT / LXX omits "the royal palace under the care of"

<sup>24</sup> [Est2:8] MT, LXX / AT "Bougaios"

<sup>25</sup> [Est2:9] MT, LXX / AT "women, saw the girl, and that she was more pleasing to him than all the women. And Esther won his personal favor and compassion."

<sup>26</sup> [Est2:9] MT / LXX omits "royal"

<sup>27</sup> [Est2:9] MT / LXX "he provided well for her and her maids in the harem." / AT replaces "So he promptly...harem" with "So he promptly took charge of her; and beyond the seven young women, he granted his own attendants to her."

<sup>28</sup> [Est2:12] MT / LXX "visit the king"

<sup>29</sup> [Est2:12] MT / LXX omits "that had been decreed for the women"

<sup>30</sup> [Est2:12] Josephus adds

treatment, six months were spent being anointed<sup>1</sup> with oil of myrrh, and the other six months with perfumes and cosmetics for the women. **13** Then, when the girl was to visit the king, she was allowed to take with her from the harem to the royal palace whatever she chose. **14** She would go in the evening and return in the morning to a second harem under the care of the royal eunuch Shaashgaz,<sup>2</sup> custodian of the concubines.<sup>3</sup> She could not return to the king unless he was pleased with her and<sup>4</sup> had her summoned by name.

**15** As for Esther, daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai (who had adopted her as his own daughter)<sup>5</sup> when her turn came to visit the king, she did not ask for anything but what the royal eunuch Hegai,<sup>6</sup> custodian of the women, suggested. Yet she won the admiration of all who saw her.<sup>7</sup> **16** And Esther was led to King Xerxes in his palace in the 10<sup>th</sup> month, Tebeth,<sup>8</sup> in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of his reign.<sup>9</sup> When evening came, she was led in, in, and was dismissed in the morning.<sup>10</sup> **17** The king passionately desired Esther more than all other women, and of all the virgins she won his favor and benevolence.<sup>11</sup> So he placed the royal diadem on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti.<sup>12</sup> **18** Then the king gave a great feast in honor of Esther to all his officials and ministers for seven days,<sup>13</sup> granting a holiday to all the provinces<sup>14</sup> and bestowing gifts with royal bounty.<sup>15</sup>

**19** From the time the virgins had been brought together, and while Mordecai was passing his time at the king's gate,<sup>16</sup> **20** Esther had not revealed her family or her nationality,<sup>17</sup> because Mordecai had told her not to; and Esther continued to follow Mordecai's instructions to fear God and to do his commandments, just as she had when she was being brought up by him. And she did not change her way of life.<sup>18 19</sup>

**21** And during the time that Mordecai spent at the king's gate,<sup>20</sup> Bigthan and Teresh,<sup>21</sup> two of the royal eunuchs who guarded the entrance,<sup>22</sup> had plotted in anger to lay hands on King Xerxes. **22** When the plot became known<sup>23</sup> to Mordecai, he told Queen<sup>24</sup> Esther, who in turn informed the king for Mordecai.<sup>25</sup> **23** So the matter was investigated and verified, and both of them were hanged on a gibbet.<sup>26</sup> And this was written in the annals for the king's use in commendation of Mordecai's loyalty.<sup>27</sup>

### CHAPTER 3 (includes Addition B)

After these events, it came to pass that<sup>28</sup> King Xerxes promoted Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite,<sup>29</sup> to high rank, seating him above all his fellow officials.<sup>30</sup> **2** All the king's servants who were at the royal gate<sup>31</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Est2:12] MT / LXX adds

<sup>2</sup> [Est2:14] MT / LXX "Hegai"

<sup>3</sup> [Est2:14] MT / LXX "women"

<sup>4</sup> [Est2:14] MT / LXX omits "was pleased with her and"

<sup>5</sup> [Est2:15] LXX / MT adds

<sup>6</sup> [Est2:15] MT, Vul / LXX, OL, Eth omits "Hegai"

<sup>7</sup> [Est2:10~15] MT, LXX / AT omits "Esther did not reveal... who saw her."

<sup>8</sup> [Est2:16] MT / LXX, Josephus "in the 12<sup>th</sup> month, Adar"

<sup>9</sup> [Est2:16] AT "And when Esther was led in to the king, she was very pleasing to him."

<sup>10</sup> [Est2:16] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>11</sup> [Est2:17] MT / LXX omits "and benevolence" / AT "And as the king considered all the virgins, Esther was shown to be the most splendid. And she found his personal favor and compassion"

<sup>12</sup> [Est2:17] MT / LXX, AT omit "and made her queen in place of Vashti"

<sup>13</sup> [Est2:18] MT / LXX "the king gave a banquet to all his friends and great men for seven days, and he celebrated the marriage of Esther" / AT "the king held a splendid wedding feast for Esther" / Josephus "he...banquet to the Persians [some add "and the Medes"] and the chief men of the nations for a whole month in honor of his marriage"

<sup>14</sup> [Est2:18] MT / LXX "granting a holiday to those under his rule" / AT "granting a holiday to all the provinces"

<sup>15</sup> [Est2:18] MT / LXX, AT omit "and bestowing gifts with royal bounty"

<sup>16</sup> [Est2:19] MT / LXX "But Mordecai served in the king's court." (omitting "From...together") / Josephus "Then her uncle moved from Babel to Susa in Perisa and dwelt there. Every day he passed his time at the palace, inquiring about the girl and how she fared; for he loved her as his own daughter."

<sup>17</sup> [Est2:20] MT / LXX omits "or nationality"

<sup>18</sup> [Est2:10] LXX adds "to fear God...commandments" & "And she did not...of life."

<sup>19</sup> [Est2:20] Josephus adds an explanation here "Now the king had made a law that no one of his people should approach him whenever he sat on the throne, unless the man was summoned. And around his throne stood men with axes, ready to punish anyone who approached the throne without being summoned. However, the king himself, as he sat, held a golden scepter which he extended to anyone whom he wished to save who approached without being summoned; and whoever touched this was out of danger."

<sup>20</sup> [Est2:21] MT / LXX "And because Mordecai had been promoted"

<sup>21</sup> [Est2:21] MT, LXX(S-corrector), Josephus / most LXX omit "Bigthan and Teresh"

<sup>22</sup> [Est2:21] MT / LXX "who were the king's chief bodyguards"

<sup>23</sup> [Est2:22] Josephus adds "but Barnabazos, the servant of one of these eunuchs, who was a Judean by race, discovered their plot and revealed it to Mordecai"

<sup>24</sup> [Est2:22] MT / LXX omits "Queen"

<sup>25</sup> [Est2:22] MT / LXX "who in turn informed the king the details of the plot"

<sup>26</sup> [Est2:23] MT / LXX "So the king interrogated the two eunuchs and hanged them."

<sup>27</sup> [Est2:19~23] MT / LXX "And the king ordered an entry to be made as a memorial in the royal archive in commendation of Mordecai's loyalty." AT omits verses 19~23

<sup>28</sup> [Est3:1] MT / LXX, AT adds

<sup>29</sup> [Est3:1] MT / LXX, AT "the Bugaeen" / Luc "the Makedonian" / Josephus (supported by Targum) "who was a descent of Amalek"

<sup>30</sup> [Est3:1] MT / LXX, AT "all his friends"

<sup>31</sup> [Est3:2] MT / LXX "All those in the court" / Luc "All" / Josephus "The foreigners and Persians"

would kneel and bow down to Haman,<sup>1</sup> for that is what the king had ordered in his regard. Mordecai, however, would not kneel and bow down to him. And the king's servants saw that Mordecai was not bowing down before Haman.<sup>2</sup>

**3** Then the king's servants who were at the royal gate<sup>3</sup> said to Mordecai, "Mordecai,<sup>4</sup> Why do you disobey the king's order and refuse to bow down before Haman?"<sup>5</sup>

**4** When they had reminded him<sup>6</sup> day after day and he would not listen to them, they informed Haman, to see whether Mordecai's explanation was acceptable,<sup>7</sup> since he had told them that he was a Judean.<sup>8</sup> **5** When Haman observed that Mordecai would not kneel and bow down to him, he was provoked to jealousy and<sup>9</sup> he was filled with anger. Since Haman was provoked, and all his rage was stirred up, he turned red, driving him from his sight.<sup>10</sup> **6** Moreover, he thought it was not enough to lay hands on Mordecai alone. Since they had told Haman of Mordecai's nationality,<sup>11</sup> he sought to destroy all the Judeans, Mordecai's people, throughout the realm of King Xerxes.<sup>12</sup>

**7** In the 1<sup>st</sup> month, Nisan, in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of King Xerxes, the pur (that is, the lot), was cast in Haman's presence to determine the day and the month for the destruction of Mordecai's people on a single day,<sup>13</sup> and<sup>14</sup> the lot fell on the 13<sup>th</sup> day<sup>15</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month,<sup>16</sup> Adar.

**8** Then with a malicious heart Haman<sup>17</sup> kept speaking evil to the king about Israel, and<sup>18</sup> said to King Xerxes, "Dispersed among the nations throughout the provinces of your kingdom, there is a certain people living apart,<sup>19</sup> a people of war and insubordinate,<sup>20</sup> with laws differing from those of every other people. They do not obey the laws of the king, though they are known among all nations because they are evil, and so it is not proper for the king to tolerate them.<sup>21</sup> **9** If it please the king and this judgment is good in his heart,<sup>22</sup> let a decree be issued to destroy them;<sup>23</sup> and I will deliver to the procurators<sup>24</sup> 10,000<sup>25</sup> silver talents for deposit in the royal treasury in order that the kingdom might be rid of this plague and have peace."<sup>26</sup>

**10** And the king removed the signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman,<sup>27</sup> son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Judeans.<sup>28</sup> **11** "Keep the silver," the king said to Haman,<sup>29</sup> "but as for this people, do with them whatever you please."<sup>30</sup>

**12** So the royal scribes were summoned; and on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month they wrote, at the dictation of Haman, an order to the royal satraps, the governors of every province, and the officials of every people, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language. It was written in<sup>31</sup> the name of King Xerxes

<sup>1</sup> [Est3:2] MT, LXX(similar) / AT "would bend over and bow down on the ground before him." / Josephus "bow down before him"

<sup>2</sup> [Est3:2] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>3</sup> [Est3:3] MT / LXX "Then those in the king's palace" / AT "Then the king's servants"

<sup>4</sup> [Est3:3] MT, AT / LXX adds

<sup>5</sup> [Est3:3] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>6</sup> [Est3:4] MT(qere) / other MT "While they were reminding him"

<sup>7</sup> [Est3:4] MT / LXX "informed Haman that Mordecai had resisted the commands of the king"

<sup>8</sup> [Est3:4] AT replaces "When they had...Judean" with "So he told them that he was a Judean. And they informed Haman about him."

<sup>9</sup> [Est3:4] MT, LXX(similar) / AT "When Haman heard, he was provoked to jealousy, and"

<sup>10</sup> [Est3:6] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>11</sup> [Est3:6] MT / LXX, AT omits "Moreover...nationality"

<sup>12</sup> [Est3:6] MT / LXX "he planned to destroy all the Judeans under the ruler of Xerxes" / AT "he sought to destroy Mordecai and all his people on a single day."

<sup>13</sup> [Est3:7] MT / LXX adds / Vul adds instead "the nation of the Judeans should be destroyed"

<sup>14</sup> [Est3:7] LXX / MT, Vul "until"

<sup>15</sup> [Est3:7] AT / LXX "14th"

<sup>16</sup> [Est3:7] Vul / LXX omits "12th" / MT omits "and the lot fell on the 13th day of the 12th month" by scribal error / AT omits "n the 1<sup>st</sup> month...Adar."

<sup>17</sup> [Est3:8] MT / LXX, AT "he"

<sup>18</sup> [Est3:8] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>19</sup> [Est3:8] MT / LXX, AT(?) omits "living apart"

<sup>20</sup> [Est3:8] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>21</sup> [Est3:8] MT, LXX / AT "differing from your laws, O King. They do not pay heed though they are known among all nations, because they are evil, and they set aside your commands to undermine your glory."

<sup>22</sup> [Est3:9] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>23</sup> [Est3:9] MT, LXX / AT "let his nation be given to me for destruction"

<sup>24</sup> [Est3:9] MT / LXX, AT omit "to the procurators"

<sup>25</sup> [Est3:9] Josephus "40,000"

<sup>26</sup> [Est3:9] Josephus adds

<sup>27</sup> [Est3:10] MT, AT / LXX "And the king removed his signet ring and put it into the hands of Haman"

<sup>28</sup> [Est3:10] MT / LXX "Haman to seal what had been written against the Judeans." / AT omits "son of...Judeans"

<sup>29</sup> [Est3:11] MT, LXX / AT "to him"

<sup>30</sup> [Est3:11] MT (lit. "the people also, to do with them whatever you please") / LXX, AT "but treat the nation as you please."

<sup>31</sup> [Est3:11] MT / LXX "province from Hodu to Cush, to 127 provinces, and to the rulers of the nations in their own language in"

and sealed with the royal signet ring.<sup>1</sup> **13** Letters were sent by couriers to all the royal provinces,<sup>2</sup> that all the Judeans, young and old, including women and children, should be killed, destroyed, wiped out<sup>3</sup> in one day, the 13<sup>th</sup> day<sup>4</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, Adar, and that their goods should be seized as spoil.

**14** *This is a copy of the letter:*<sup>5</sup>

*The great King Xerxes writes to the rulers and satraps<sup>6</sup> of the 127 provinces from Hodu to Cush, and the the governors subordinate to them,<sup>7</sup> as follows:*

**15** *When I came to rule many peoples and to hold sway over the whole world, I determined not to be carried away with the sense of power, but always to deal fairly and with clemency; to provide for my subjects a life of complete tranquility; and by making<sup>8</sup> my government more civilized<sup>9</sup> and effective as far as the borders, to restore the peace desired by all men. **16** When I consulted my counselors as to how this might be accomplished, Haman, who excels<sup>10</sup> among us in wisdom, who is outstanding for constant devotion and steadfast loyalty, and who has gained the second rank in the kingdom, **17** brought it to our attention that, mixed in with all the races throughout the world, there is one people of ill-will, which, on the one hand, by its laws, is opposed to every other people and on the other, continually disregards the decrees of kings, so that the unity of empire blamelessly designed by us cannot be established.<sup>11</sup>*

**18** *Therefore, having noted that this most singular people is continually at variance with all men, lives by divergent and alien laws, is inimical to our interests,<sup>12</sup> and commits the worst crimes, so that stability of government cannot be obtained,<sup>13</sup> **19** we hereby decree that one and all of all those who are indicated to you in the letters of Haman, who is in charge of the administration and is a second father to us, shall, together with their women and children, be utterly destroyed by the swords of their enemies, without any pity or mercy, on the 13<sup>th</sup> day<sup>14</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, that is the month of Adar which is Dystros, of the current year;<sup>15</sup> in order to eliminate all the Judeans and to take their children as plunder, **20** so when these people—whose present ill-will is of long standing—may on a single day go down together into the Netherworld by a violent death,<sup>16</sup> that they may finally leave our affairs stable and undisturbed for the future.<sup>17</sup>*

*But whoever shall hide the Judean race shall be without a place to live, not only among men but also among birds, and he shall be consumed by holy fire, and his possessions shall revert to the State. Farewell!<sup>18</sup>*

**21** A copy of the decree to be promulgated as law in every province was published to all the peoples, that they might be prepared for that day.<sup>19</sup> **22** The couriers set out in haste at the king's command; meanwhile, the decree was promulgated in the stronghold of Susa.<sup>20</sup> The king and Haman then sat down to feast, but the city of Susa<sup>21</sup> was thrown into confusion.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Est3:12] MT, LXX(similar, see above for variants) / AT replaces "So the royal scribes... signet ring" with "'Write to all the lands, and seal it with the king's signet ring. For there is none who will reject the seal.' So Haman went to his gods to learn the day of their death and cast lots for the 13th day of month of Adar Nisan to murder all the Judeans, from male to female, and to take their young children as plunder."

<sup>2</sup> [Est3:13] MT / LXX "Letters...couriers throughout Xerxes' kingdom" / AT "And he hurried and delivered it into the hands of swift horsemen." [AT omits "that all...seized as spoil."]

<sup>3</sup> [Est3:13] MT / LXX "that the race of Judeans should be effaced"

<sup>4</sup> [Est3:13] MT / LXX omits "the 13<sup>th</sup> day"

<sup>5</sup> [Est3:14] AT "And he subjoined the following letter"

<sup>6</sup> [Est3:14] LXX, Josephus / AT adds

<sup>7</sup> [Est3:14] AT omits "and the governors subordinate to them"

<sup>8</sup> [Est3:15] AT "and making"

<sup>9</sup> [Est3:15] many "quiet"

<sup>10</sup> [Est3:16] AT "who has excelled"

<sup>11</sup> [Est3:17] AT "so that the kingdom can never attain stability"

<sup>12</sup> [Est3:18] AT "commands"

<sup>13</sup> [Est3:19] AT "so that we may never be established in the sole-rule directed by us"

<sup>14</sup> [Est3:19] Emendation / LXX, AT, Josephus "14<sup>th</sup> day"

<sup>15</sup> [Est3:19] AT omits "of the current year"

<sup>16</sup> [Est3:20] AT omits "by a violent death"

<sup>17</sup> [Est3:20] AT "at last be stable and never again furnish us with affairs for concern."

<sup>18</sup> [Est3:20] LXX, AT / OL adds

<sup>19</sup> [Est3:21] MT / LXX "Copies of the letters were posted in every province, and it was ordered for all the nations to be prepared for that day." [see below for AT]

<sup>20</sup> [Est3:22] MT / LXX "The matter proceeded quickly even to Susa." [see below for AT]

<sup>21</sup> [Est3:22] MT / LXX omits "of Susa" [see below for AT]

<sup>22</sup> [Est3:21-22] This entire paragraph in the AT is condensed to "And in Susa this decree was posted."

## CHAPTER 4A

When Mordecai learned all that was happening, he tore his garments, put on sackcloth and ashes, and walked through the square of the city crying out loudly and bitterly.<sup>1</sup> “An innocent people is condemned to death!”<sup>2</sup> **2** And he even came as far as the royal gate and stood there,<sup>3</sup> for no one clothed in sackcloth and ashes<sup>4</sup> was allowed to enter the royal gate.<sup>5</sup> **3** Likewise in each of the provinces, wherever the king’s legal enactment reached,<sup>6</sup> the Judeans went into deep mourning, with fasting, weeping, and lament;<sup>7</sup> they all slept on sackcloth and ashes.

**4** So Esther’s<sup>8</sup> maids and eunuchs came and told her. Overwhelmed with anguish upon hearing what had happened,<sup>9</sup> she sent garments for Mordecai to put on, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he refused.<sup>10</sup> **5** Esther then summoned Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs whom he had placed at her service,<sup>11</sup> and commanded him to find out what Mordecai’s action meant and the reason for it.<sup>12</sup> **6** So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the public square in front of the royal gate.<sup>13</sup> **7** And Mordecai told him everything that had happened, as well as the exact amount of silver<sup>14</sup> Haman had promised to pay to the royal<sup>15</sup> treasury for the slaughter of the Judeans. **8** He also gave him a copy of the written decree<sup>16</sup> which had been promulgated in Susa for their destruction, to show and explain to Esther. He was to instruct her to go to the king; she was to plead and intercede with him in behalf of her people.<sup>17</sup>

**9** *“Remember the days of your lowly estate,” Mordecai had him say, “when you were supported by my hand; because Haman, who is second in command has spoken to the king, and has sentenced us to death. Therefore Call upon the Lord,<sup>18</sup> and speak to the king about us. Save us from death.”*

So Hathach returned to Esther and told her everything<sup>19</sup> Mordecai had said.<sup>20</sup>

**10** Then Esther replied to Hathach and gave him this message for Mordecai,<sup>21</sup> **11** “All the servants of the king and the people of his provinces know that any man or woman who<sup>22</sup> goes to the king in the inner court<sup>23</sup> without being summoned, suffers the automatic penalty of death,<sup>24</sup> unless the king extends to him the golden scepter, thus sparing his life.<sup>25</sup> Now as for me, I have not been summoned to the king<sup>26</sup> for thirty days. And how can I go without being summoned?”<sup>27</sup>

**12** All of<sup>28</sup> Esther’s words were reported by Hathach<sup>29</sup> to Mordecai. **13** Then Mordecai had this reply brought to Esther,<sup>30</sup> “Do not imagine that because you are in the king’s palace, that you alone of all the Judeans will escape.<sup>31</sup> **14** Even if you remain silent at a time like this, relief and deliverance will come to the Judeans

<sup>1</sup> [Est4A:1] MT, LXX (adding “the square of”), supported by Josephus (omits “and bitterly”) / AT “Now Mordecai learned all that was heppning, and the city of Susa was in turmoil because of what had taken place. For throughout the whole city, there was great and bitter sorrow for all the Judeans. Now Mordecai went to his home, folded up his clothes, and put on sackcloth. After he had sprinkled ashes on himself...”

<sup>2</sup> [Est4A:1] MT, AT / LXX, Josephus adds

<sup>3</sup> [Est4A:2] MT / LXX “And he came to the royal gate and stood there” / AT “he went out as far as the outer courtyard and stood there”

<sup>4</sup> [Est4A:2] MT, AT / LXX adds

<sup>5</sup> [Est4A:2] MT / LXX “the courtyard” / AT “the royal precincts”

<sup>6</sup> [Est4A:3] MT / LXX “provinces, where the letters were posted”

<sup>7</sup> [Est4A:3] MT / LXX omits “with fasting, weeping, and lament” / AT omits “Likewise in each....sackcloth and ashes.”

<sup>8</sup> [Est4A:3] MT, (supported by AT) / LXX “So the queen’s”

<sup>9</sup> [Est4A:4] MT / LXX adds

<sup>10</sup> [Est4A:4] MT, LXX similar (see above for variants) / AT “So he called a eunuch and sent him to Esther. And the queen said, ‘Take off his sackcloth and bring him in.’ But he did not want to.”

<sup>11</sup> [Est4A:4] MT / LXX “Hathach, her eunuch who was placed at her service” / Josephus “Hathach, who happened to be nearby”

<sup>12</sup> [Est4A:5] MT / LXX “and sent him so she might learn the truth from Mordecai.”

<sup>13</sup> [Est4A:5-6] MT / LXX omits “So Hathach went out...royal gate” / AT omits “Esther then summoned...royal gate”

<sup>14</sup> [Est4A:7] MT / LXX, OL “as well as the 10,000 talents”

<sup>15</sup> [Est4A:7] MT / LXX omits “royal”

<sup>16</sup> [Est4A:7] MT / LXX omits “of the written decree”

<sup>17</sup> [Est4A:7] MT, LXX (similar) / AT replaces “and Mordecai told him...her people” with “Instead he said, ‘Thus you will say to her, “Do not turn away from going to the king and flattering his person for the sake of me and my people.”’”

<sup>18</sup> [Est4A:8] LXX / AT “upon God”

<sup>19</sup> [Est4A:9] LXX, Vul / MT omits “everything” / AT “So he made known to her the tribulation of Israel”

<sup>20</sup> [Est4A:9] MT / LXX “So Hathach returned and told her everything” / AT “So he made known to her the tribulation of Israel”

<sup>21</sup> [Est4A:10] MT / LXX “And Esther replied to Hathach, ‘Go to Mordecai, and say’ / AT “And she sent to him saying as follows”

<sup>22</sup> [Est4A:11] MT / LXX “All the nations of the empire know that any man or woman who” / AT “You know as well as anyone, that whoever”

<sup>23</sup> [Est4A:11] MT, LXX / AT omits “in the inner court”

<sup>24</sup> [Est4A:11] MT / LXX “, there is no deliverance for him.” / AT “, will be subject to death.”

<sup>25</sup> [Est4A:11] MT, LXX / AT omits “thus sparing his life”

<sup>26</sup> [Est4A:11] MT, LXX / AT “to him”

<sup>27</sup> [Est4A:11] MT, LXX / AT, OL, Vul add

<sup>28</sup> [Est4A:9] LXX, Vul / MT omits “All of”

<sup>29</sup> [Est4A:13] MT / LXX, Vul adds / AT omits “All of Esther’s...to Mordecai”

<sup>30</sup> [Est4A:13] MT / LXX “Then Mordecai said to Hathach, ‘Go, and say to her, “Esther”’” / AT “Then Mordecai sent to her, and said to her”

<sup>31</sup> [Est4A:13] MT / LXX “Do not imagine that you alone of all the Judeans in the kingdom will escape.” / AT omits altogether



from another source;<sup>1</sup> but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have obtained the royal dignity<sup>2</sup> for *such* a time as this?"

**15** Then Esther sent this response back to Mordecai,<sup>3</sup> **16** "Go and assemble all the Judeans who are in Susa,<sup>4</sup> Susa;<sup>4</sup> fast on my behalf, all of you, not eating or drinking, night or day, for three days.<sup>5</sup> And I, along with my maids will also fast in the same way. Prepared in this manner,<sup>6</sup> I will go to the king, contrary to the law.<sup>7</sup> If I perish, I perish!"<sup>8</sup>

So Mordecai went away and did exactly as Esther had commanded.<sup>9</sup>

#### CHAPTER 4B (Addition C)

*Recalling everything that the Lord had done,<sup>10</sup> he besought the Lord **2** and said, "O Lord God, Almighty King, all things are in your power,<sup>11</sup> and there is no one able to oppose<sup>12</sup> you when it is your will to save the house of Israel. **3** You made heaven and earth and every wonderful thing under the heavens. **4** You are the Lord<sup>13</sup> of all, and there is no one who can resist you, Lord.<sup>14</sup> **5** You know all things and the people of Israel. You know, O Lord, that it was not out of insolence nor pride<sup>15</sup> nor desire for fame that I acted in this way, by refusing to bow down to the proud<sup>16</sup> Haman. **6** I would have gladly kissed the soles of his feet for the salvation<sup>17</sup> of Israel. **7** But I acted as I did so as not to place the honor of man above that of God.<sup>18</sup> And I will not bow down to anyone but you, my Lord. And it is not out of pride that I am acting in this manner.<sup>19</sup>*

**8** "And now, Lord God, King, God of<sup>20</sup> Abraham, spare your people, for our enemies plan our ruin<sup>21</sup> and are bent upon destroying and abolishing the inheritance that was yours from the beginning. **9** Do not spurn your portion, which you redeemed for yourself<sup>22</sup> out of Egypt. **10** Hear my<sup>23</sup> prayer; have pity on your inheritance<sup>24</sup> and turn our sorrow into joy:<sup>25</sup> in this way, we shall live to sing praise to your name, O Lord.<sup>26</sup> Do not silence those who praise<sup>27</sup> you."

**11** All Israel, too, cried out with all their strength, for death was staring them in the face.<sup>28</sup>

**12** And Queen Esther, seized with mortal anguish, likewise had recourse to the Lord. **13** Taking off her splendid garments<sup>29</sup> and every sign of her magnificence, she put on garments of<sup>30</sup> distress and mourning. In place of her precious ointments she, covered her head with dirt and ashes. She afflicted her body severely; all her festive adornments were put aside, and her hair was wholly disheveled.<sup>31</sup>

**14** Then she prayed to the Lord, the God of Israel,<sup>32</sup> saying, "My Lord, our King, you alone are God.<sup>1</sup> Help me, who am alone<sup>2</sup> and have no help but you, **15** for I am taking my life in my hand. **16** As a child I always

<sup>1</sup> [Est4A:14] AT "If you ignore your nation and do not help them, God will be their help and salvation"

<sup>2</sup> [Est4A:14] MT / LXX, AT "have been made queen"

<sup>3</sup> [Est4A:15] MT / LXX "Then Esther sent the messenger that came to her back to Mordecai, saying" / AT "Then the queen set, saying"

<sup>4</sup> [Est4A:16] Josephus "Go to Susa, and assemble all the Judeans who are there."

<sup>5</sup> [Est4A:16] MT, LXX / AT "Propose a service and earnestly beg God."

<sup>6</sup> [Est4A:16] MT / LXX (incorrectly) "Then prepared"

<sup>7</sup> [Est4A:16] MT, LXX / AT "the king uninvited"

<sup>8</sup> [Est4A:16] MT / LXX "even if I must perish." / AT "even if it is necessary that I perish."

<sup>9</sup> [Est4A:16] MT, LXX / AT "So Mordecai did so."

<sup>10</sup> [Est4B:1] LXX / AT "Recalling what he [the Lord] had done"

<sup>11</sup> [Est4B:2] LXX / AT "Master, Almighty, by whose power all things exist"

<sup>12</sup> [Est4B:2] LXX / AT "resist"

<sup>13</sup> [Est4B:4] LXX / AT "Master"

<sup>14</sup> [Est4B:1-4] OL "Mordecai tore his clothes and spread out sackcloth and fell on his face to the earth, and so did the elders of the people, from morning until evening. And they said, "Blessed are you, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob!" / AT omits "and there is no one who can resist you, Lord."

<sup>15</sup> [Est4B:5] LXX / AT omits "or pride"

<sup>16</sup> [Est4B:5] LXX / AT "uncircumcised"

<sup>17</sup> [Est4B:6] LXX / AT "sake"

<sup>18</sup> [Est4B:7] LXX / AT "honor of anyone above your glory, Master"

<sup>19</sup> [Est4B:7] LXX / AT "but you, the True One. And I will not do it even under duress."

<sup>20</sup> [Est4B:8] LXX / many LXX "Lord, O King of" / AT, Vul "Lord, who made a covenant with"

<sup>21</sup> [Est4B:8] LXX / AT "enemies advanced to ruin us"

<sup>22</sup> [Est4B:9] LXX / AT omits "for yourself"

<sup>23</sup> [Est4B:10] LXX / AT "our"

<sup>24</sup> [Est4B:10] LXX / AT "heritage"

<sup>25</sup> [Est4B:10] AT / LXX "feasting"

<sup>26</sup> [Est4B:10] LXX / AT "to you"

<sup>27</sup> [Est4B:10] LXX / AT "who sing praise"

<sup>28</sup> [Est4B:11] LXX / AT omits "All Israel...in the face."

<sup>29</sup> [Est4B:13] Origen "adornment"

<sup>30</sup> [Est4B:13] LXX / AT omits "garments of"

<sup>31</sup> [Est4B:13] AT "aside, and clothed her lovely hair with humility"

<sup>32</sup> [Est4B:14] LXX / AT omits "the God of Israel" / OL omits "Then she prayed...Israel"

heard from the people of the land of my forefathers<sup>3</sup> that you, O Lord, chose<sup>4</sup> Israel from among all peoples, and our fathers from among all their ancestors, appointing Israel over them<sup>5</sup> as a lasting heritage, and that you fulfilled all your promises to them; you provided them with as much as they asked for.<sup>6</sup>

**17** “But now<sup>7</sup> we have sinned in your sight, and you have delivered us into the hands of our enemies, **18** because<sup>8</sup> we worshiped their gods. You are righteous, O Lord! **19** But now they are not satisfied with our bitter servitude, but have covenanted with their idols<sup>9</sup> **20** to abolish the decree you have pronounced, and<sup>10</sup> to destroy your heritage; to close the mouths of those who praise you, and to extinguish the glory of your temple and your altar; **21** and<sup>11</sup> to open the mouths of the nations<sup>12</sup> to acclaim their false gods, and to extol an earthly king forever. **22** O Lord, do not relinquish your scepter to those that are nought.<sup>13</sup> Do not let them gloat<sup>14</sup> over our ruin, but<sup>15</sup> turn their own counsel against them and make an example of the man who instigated this evil<sup>16</sup> against us.

**23** “Be mindful of us,<sup>17</sup> O Lord. Manifest yourself to us<sup>18</sup> in the time of our distress, and give me courage,<sup>19</sup> King of gods and Ruler of every power.<sup>20</sup> **24** In the presence of the lion,<sup>21</sup> put persuasive words in my mouth and give favor to my words,<sup>22</sup> and turn<sup>23</sup> his heart to hate our enemy, so that he and those who are in league with him may perish. **25** Save us by your mighty<sup>24</sup> hand, and help me, who am alone and have no one but you, O Lord.<sup>25</sup>

“You know all things. **26** You know that I hate the glory of the pagans, and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised or of any foreigner. **27** You know, O Lord,<sup>26</sup> that I am under constraint, that I<sup>27</sup> abhor the sign of grandeur which rests upon my head on days when I appear in public; I abhor it like a polluted rag, and do not wear it in private.<sup>28</sup> **28** I, your handmaid, have never eaten at the table of Haman,<sup>29</sup> nor have I graced the banquet of the king or drunk the wine of libations. **29** From the day I was brought here till now,<sup>30</sup> your handmaid has had no joy except in you, O Lord, God of Abraham.<sup>31</sup> **30** O God, more powerful than all,<sup>32</sup> hear the voice of those in despair. Save us from the power of the wicked, and deliver me, Lord, from the grip of my fear.<sup>33</sup>

## CHAPTER 5 (includes Addition D)

Now on the third day, when she had ceased praying, Esther<sup>34</sup> took off her penitential garments and washed her body with water and applied cosmetics,<sup>35</sup> and put on her royal garments.<sup>36</sup> **2** In making her state appearance,

<sup>1</sup> [Est4B:14] LXX / AT “saying, “Lord, King, you are my only ally” / OL “saying, “The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.”

<sup>2</sup> [Est4B:14] LXX / AT “insignificant”

<sup>3</sup> [Est4B:15] LXX / AT “heard from my father’s book”

<sup>4</sup> [Est4B:16] LXX / AT “redeemed”

<sup>5</sup> [Est4B:16] LXX / AT adds

<sup>6</sup> [Est4B:16] LXX / AT “fulfilled what you said to them; you...for.”

<sup>7</sup> [Est4B:17] LXX / AT omits “But now”

<sup>8</sup> [Est4B:18] LXX / AT “if”

<sup>9</sup> [Est4B:19] LXX / AT but they placed their hands on the hands of their idols” / Vul “but they attribute the strength of their own hands to the power of their idols”

<sup>10</sup> [Est4B:20] LXX / AT omits “and”

<sup>11</sup> [Est4B:21] LXX / AT adds

<sup>12</sup> [Est4B:21] LXX / AT “enemies”

<sup>13</sup> [Est4B:22] LXX / AT “to the enemies hating you”

<sup>14</sup> [Est4B:22] LXX / AT “delight”

<sup>15</sup> [Est4B:22] LXX / AT omits “but”

<sup>16</sup> [Est4B:23] LXX / AT adds

<sup>17</sup> [Est4B:23] LXX / AT “Appear to us”

<sup>18</sup> [Est4B:23] LXX / AT adds

<sup>19</sup> [Est4B:23] LXX / AT “and do not crush us.”

<sup>20</sup> [Est4B:17-23] LXX / AT omits “King of gods and Ruler of every power” / Josephus, OL omits “But now we have sinned...power.”

<sup>21</sup> [Est4B:24] LXX / AT “king”

<sup>22</sup> [Est4B:24] LXX / AT adds “and give favor to my words” / OL adds “and make me most attractive before him”

<sup>23</sup> [Est4B:24] LXX / AT “change”

<sup>24</sup> [Est4B:25] LXX / AT adds

<sup>25</sup> [Est4B:25] LXX / AT omits “who am alone...O Lord.” And has only “because”

<sup>26</sup> [Est4B:27] LXX / AT adds

<sup>27</sup> [Est4B:27-27] LXX(A) omits “abhor the bed...that I” by scribal error

<sup>28</sup> [Est4B:27] OL omits “when I appear in public...private.” / AT adds “and I do not wear it except” before “on days” & omits “and do not wear it in private”

<sup>29</sup> [Est4B:28] LXX / AT “at their tables”

<sup>30</sup> [Est4B:29] LXX / AT omits “till now”

<sup>31</sup> [Est4B:29] LXX / AT “you, Master” / OL omits “God of Abraham”

<sup>32</sup> [Est4B:30] LXX / AT “And now, you who are mighty over all”

<sup>33</sup> [Est4B:30] LXX / AT “wicked. Take me, Lord, from the grip of my fear.”

<sup>34</sup> [Est5:1] MT, AT / LXX “she”

<sup>35</sup> [Est5:1] OL adds

<sup>36</sup> [Est5:1] LXX, AT, OL / MT “put on royalty”

after invoking the all-seeing<sup>1</sup> God and savior, she took two maids with her; **3** on the one she leaned gently for support, **4** while the other followed her, bearing her train. **5** And she glowed with the perfection of her beauty, and her countenance was as joyous as it<sup>2</sup> was lovely, though her heart was shrunk with fear<sup>3</sup> of the Lord, in the terror of death, because death was before her eyes.<sup>4</sup>

**6** She passed through all<sup>5</sup> the portals till she stood in the inner courtyard, looking toward the royal palace,<sup>6</sup> while the king<sup>7</sup> was seated on his royal throne in the audience chamber, facing the palace doorway.<sup>8</sup> And he was clothed in full robes of states, and covered with gold and precious stones, so that he inspired great awe.<sup>9</sup> He saw Queen Esther standing in the courtyard.<sup>10</sup> **7** As he looked up, his features ablaze like a bull<sup>11</sup> in the height of majestic anger, and he considered killing her. But he was uncertain, and calling out, he said, “Who dares to enter unsummoned into the court?”<sup>12</sup> the queen staggered,<sup>13</sup> changed color, and leaned weakly against the head of the maid in front of her.

**8** But God of the Judeans and the Lord of all creatures<sup>14</sup> changed the spirit of the king and turned his anger<sup>15</sup> to gentleness, and she obtained favor in his sight.<sup>16</sup> In great anxiety he sprang from his throne, held her in his arms until she recovered, and comforted her with reassuring words.<sup>17</sup>

**9** “What is it, Esther?” he said to her. “I am your brother. Take courage! **10** You shall not die due to this general decree<sup>18</sup> of ours. **11** Come near! The threat is not against you. Look, the scepter is in your hand.”<sup>19</sup>

**12** And the king extended toward her the golden scepter which he held. She drew close, and touched the top of the staff.<sup>20</sup> And he embraced her and said, “Speak to me.”

**13** And she replied, “My lord,<sup>21</sup> I saw you as a messenger of God, and my heart was troubled with fear of your majesty.<sup>22</sup> **14** For you are awesome, my lord, though your glance is full of kindness.”<sup>23</sup>

**15** As she said this, she fainted.<sup>24</sup> **16** The king became troubled, and all his attendants tried to revive her.

**16** Then the king said to her, “What is it, Queen<sup>25</sup> Esther? What is your request? Even if it is half the kingdom, it shall be granted to you.”<sup>26</sup>

**17** And Esther replied, “Today is my special day. Therefore,<sup>27</sup> If it please the king, come today<sup>28</sup> with your friend<sup>29</sup> Haman to a banquet I have prepared.”

**18** And the king ordered, “Have Haman make haste, that he<sup>30</sup> may fulfill the wish of Esther.” So the king went with Haman to the banquet Esther had prepared,<sup>31</sup> a sumptuous meal.<sup>32</sup>

**19** During the drinking of the wine,<sup>33</sup> the king said to Esther, “Queen Esther,<sup>1</sup> What is your petition? For it shall be granted. And what is your request? It shall be honored, even if it is half the kingdom.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Est5:1] LXX / AT “knowing”

<sup>2</sup> [Est5:1] LXX / AT omits “was as joyous as it”

<sup>3</sup> [Est5:1] LXX, (OL), Josephus / AT omits “with fear”

<sup>4</sup> [Est5:1] OL adds “shrunk and fearing the Lord...eyes.”

<sup>5</sup> [Est5:1] most LXX / LXX(A), AT omits “all”

<sup>6</sup> [Est5:1] MT / LXX, AT “stood before the king.” / OL “entered the inner hall”

<sup>7</sup> [Est5:1] MT, AT / LXX “while he” / OL “and King Ahaseurus”

<sup>8</sup> [Est5:1] MT / LXX, AT, OL omits “in the audience chamber, facing the palace doorway”

<sup>9</sup> [Est5:1] OL “And he was dressed in purple and precious stones and had a gold scepter in his hand.”

<sup>10</sup> [Est5:2] MT / LXX, AT, OL omits “He saw Queen Esther standing in the courtyard”

<sup>11</sup> [Est5:2] LXX / AT, OL “features ablaze like a bull” / Josephus (error) “features uncovered”

<sup>12</sup> [Est5:2] OL adds

<sup>13</sup> [Est5:2] LXX / AT “the queen was terrified”

<sup>14</sup> [Est5:2] OL adds

<sup>15</sup> [Est5:2] LXX / AT adds

<sup>16</sup> [Est5:2] MT / LXX, AT omits “and she obtained favor in his sight”

<sup>17</sup> [Est5:2] LXX / AT omits “until she recovered” & “with reassuring words”

<sup>18</sup> [Est5:2] LXX / AT “act”

<sup>19</sup> [Est5:2] LXX / Vul “Come near and touch the scepter.” / AT “And the threat does not apply to you. See, the scepter is in your hand” / OL (supported by Josephus) “See, the scepter is in your hand.”

<sup>20</sup> [Est5:2] MT / LXX, AT “scepter and placed it on her neck.”

<sup>21</sup> [Est5:2] LXX / AT omits “My lord”

<sup>22</sup> [Est5:2] LXX / AT “my heart melted from the majesty of your rage.”

<sup>23</sup> [Est5:2] LXX / AT omits “For you are awesome...kindness.”

<sup>24</sup> [Est5:2] LXX / AT “And upon her face was a measure of sweat.”

<sup>25</sup> [Est5:3] MT / LXX, AT omits “Queen” / AT also omits “to her”

<sup>26</sup> [Est5:3] MT, LXX / AT “Esther? Tell me, and I will do it for you, up to half the kingdom.”

<sup>27</sup> [Est5:3] MT / LXX adds / AT also adds, but has “Today” instead of “Tomorrow”

<sup>28</sup> [Est5:3] MT, LXX / AT “tomorrow”

<sup>29</sup> [Est5:4] MT, LXX / AT, OL add

<sup>30</sup> [Est5:5] MT / LXX, AT “we”

<sup>31</sup> [Est5:5] MT, AT / LXX “had spoken about”

<sup>32</sup> [Est5:5] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>33</sup> [Est5:6] MT, LXX / AT omits “During the drinking of the wine”

**20** Then Esther<sup>3</sup> replied, “This is my petition and request: if I have found favor in the sight of the king<sup>4</sup> and if it pleases your majesty to grant my petition and honor my request,<sup>5</sup> come with Haman tomorrow to a banquet which I shall prepare for you; and tomorrow<sup>6</sup> I will do as the king has asked.”<sup>7</sup>

So the king said, “Do as you want.”<sup>8</sup>

**21** That day Haman went out from the king, very<sup>9</sup> happy and with a merry heart. But when Haman saw that Mordecai the Judean<sup>10</sup> at the royal gate<sup>11</sup> did not rise, nor showed fear of him, he was filled with anger against Mordecai. **22** However, Haman restrained himself and<sup>12</sup> went home, where he summoned<sup>13</sup> his friends<sup>14</sup> and his wife Zeresh. **23** And to them, Haman<sup>15</sup> recounted the greatness of his riches, the large number of his sons, and just how the king had promoted him<sup>16</sup> and how *the king* had placed him above the officials and royal servants.<sup>17</sup>

**24** “Moreover,” Haman added, “Queen Esther<sup>18</sup> invited no one to the banquet she has prepared<sup>19</sup> with the king, except for me;<sup>20</sup> again tomorrow I am to be her guest, with the king.<sup>21</sup> **25** Yet none of this satisfies me as long as I continue to see<sup>22</sup> Mordecai the Judean sitting at the royal gate.<sup>23</sup> And he does not bow down to me.”<sup>24</sup>

**26** His wife Zeresh and all his friends<sup>25</sup> said to him, “He is from the race of the Judeans. Since the king has allowed you to destroy the Judeans, and the gods have given you a day of destruction to take revenge upon them,<sup>26</sup> Have a gibbet, 50<sup>27</sup> cubits in height, be made for you and be set up.<sup>28</sup> And in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it.<sup>29</sup> Then go to the banquet with the king in good cheer.”

This suggestion pleased Haman, and he had the gibbet erected.<sup>30</sup>

## CHAPTER 6

On that night, the king was unable to sleep and he stayed awake.<sup>31</sup> So, because he did not want to waste his wakeful hours in idleness, but to use them for something of importance to his kingdom, he asked that the chronicles of notable events be brought in. While these were being read<sup>32</sup> to him,<sup>33</sup> **2** the passage occurred in which Mordecai reported Bigthan and Teresh,<sup>34</sup> two of the royal eunuchs who guarded the entrance, for seeking to lay hands on King Xerxes.<sup>35</sup> And the king thought seriously on that matter, saying, “Mordecai is a loyal man for protecting my life, since he has kept me alive until now, and I am sitting on my throne today, and I have done nothing for him. I have not acted righteously.”<sup>36</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Est5:6] MT / LXX adds “Queen Esther” / AT adds “Queen”

<sup>2</sup> [Est5:6] MT, AT, Josephus / LXX omits “And what is your request...even if it be half the kingdom”

<sup>3</sup> [Est5:7] MT, AT / LXX “she”

<sup>4</sup> [Est5:8] MT, LXX / AT “favor before you, O King”

<sup>5</sup> [Est5:8] MT, AT / LXX omits “and if it pleases...my request”

<sup>6</sup> [Est5:8] LXX / MT omits “tomorrow” by scribal error

<sup>7</sup> [Est5:8] MT / LXX “I will do these same things” / AT “I will do likewise”

<sup>8</sup> [Est5:8] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>9</sup> [Est5:9] MT / LXX adds

<sup>10</sup> [Est5:9] MT / LXX adds

<sup>11</sup> [Est5:9] MT / LXX “the courtyard” and omits “did not rise...no fear of him” / AT replaces “But when Haman...against Mordecai” with “And it was likewise reported to Haman, and he marveled. And the king departed and retired.”

<sup>12</sup> [Est5:10] MT / LXX, AT omits “restrained himself and”

<sup>13</sup> [Est5:10] MT, LXX / AT “he gathered together”

<sup>14</sup> [Est5:10] MT, LXX / AT “sons”

<sup>15</sup> [Est5:11] MT / LXX “he”

<sup>16</sup> [Est5:11] MT / LXX “riches that the king had bestowed on him”

<sup>17</sup> [Est5:11] MT / LXX “had made him to take precedence and be leader of the kingdom.” / AT omits “And to them...royal servants.”

<sup>18</sup> [Est5:12] MT / LXX (supported by AT) “the queen”

<sup>19</sup> [Est5:12] MT / LXX (supported by AT) omits “she has prepared”

<sup>20</sup> [Est5:12] AT “. And he boasted saying, “The queen invited no one on her special day, except for the king and me alone.”

<sup>21</sup> [Est5:12] MT / LXX, AT omit “with the king”

<sup>22</sup> [Est5:13] MT, LXX / AT “Yet this alone distresses me: whenever I see”

<sup>23</sup> [Est5:13] MT / LXX “Judean in the court.” / AT “Judean in the royal court.”

<sup>24</sup> [Est5:13] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>25</sup> [Est5:14] MT, LXX / AT omits “and all his friends”

<sup>26</sup> [Est5:14] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>27</sup> [Est5:26] some Josephus “60”

<sup>28</sup> [Est5:14] MT / LXX “be made for you” / AT “be made for you and be set up”

<sup>29</sup> [Est5:14] MT, LXX / AT “And hang him on the gibbet. And in the morning, you shall ask the king about him.”

<sup>30</sup> [Est5:14] MT, LXX / AT “This pleased Haman, and he did so.”

<sup>31</sup> [Est6:1] MT, Vul / LXX, AT, OL(?), Josephus “But the Lord [AT “Mighty One”] made the king unable to sleep” [AT adds “and he stayed awake”]

<sup>32</sup> [Est6:1] MT / LXX “So he asked his teacher to bring in the written daily annals. While they were being read” / AT “So the readers were called. And while the court record was read to him” / Josephus “So, because...kingdom, he asked that the records of the kings who were before him, and those of his own deeds be brought in; and read them to him. While he had brought them and was reading them”

<sup>33</sup> [Est6:1] LXX, AT / MT “read before the king”

<sup>34</sup> [Est6:1] MT / LXX, AT omits “Bigthan and Teresh”

<sup>35</sup> [Est6:2] MT, LXX / AT omits “who guarded the entrance...King Xerxes”

<sup>36</sup> [Est6:2] MT, LXX / AT, OL add

**3** The king asked his servants,<sup>1</sup> “What was done<sup>2</sup> to reward and honor Mordecai the savior<sup>3</sup> for this?”<sup>4</sup>  
The king’s servants who attended him replied, “Nothing was done for him.”<sup>5</sup>

**4** And while the king was inquiring about Mordecai’s goodwill, behold, Haman was in the court!<sup>6</sup>  
“Who is in the court?”<sup>7</sup> the king asked.

And it was Haman.<sup>8</sup> Now Haman had entered<sup>9</sup> the outer court of the king’s palace<sup>10</sup> before the usual hour<sup>11</sup>  
hour<sup>11</sup> to suggest to the king that Mordecai should be hanged on the gibbet he had raised for him.

**5** The king’s servants answered him, “Look! Haman is waiting in the court.”<sup>12</sup>  
“Let him come in,” the king said.<sup>13</sup>

**6** When Haman entered, the king said to him,<sup>14</sup> “Knowing that you are the only friend loyal to me, I beg you to advise me<sup>15</sup> What should be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor?”<sup>16</sup>

Now Haman thought in his heart,<sup>17</sup> “Whom would the king wish to honor more than me?” **7** So he replied to the king,<sup>18</sup> “For the man whom the king wishes to honor **8** there should be brought<sup>19</sup> the royal<sup>20</sup> robe and a gold necklace<sup>21</sup> which the king wore<sup>22</sup> and the royal<sup>23</sup> horse on which the king rode when the royal crown was placed on his head.<sup>24</sup> **9** And the robe and the horse<sup>25</sup> should be consigned to one of the noblest of the king’s officials,<sup>26</sup> who must clothe the man the king wishes to honor;<sup>27</sup> have him ride on the horse in the public square of the city, and cry out before him, saying,<sup>28</sup> ‘This is what is done for the man who esteems the king,<sup>29</sup> whom the king wishes to honor!’”

**10** Then the king said to Haman, “Make haste! Take the robe and horse as you have proposed,<sup>30</sup> and do this for Mordecai the Judean, who is sitting at the royal gate.<sup>31</sup> And do not omit anything you proposed.”<sup>32</sup>

Now when Haman realized that it was not he himself who would be honored, but that it was Mordecai, his heart was utterly broken, and his spirit became feeble.<sup>33</sup>

**11** So Haman took the robe and horse, showing reverence to Mordecai, even on the very same day on which he intended to impale him. And he said to Mordecai, “Take off the sackcloth!”

And Mordecai was troubled, like one who is dying; and in distress he took off the sackcloth. But then he clothed Mordecai with the splendid garments. And Mordecai thought he saw a sign, and his heart was toward the Lord; and he was speechless. And Haman hastened to put him on horseback, and Haman<sup>34</sup> brought him on

<sup>1</sup> [Est6:3] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>2</sup> [Est6:3] MT, LXX / AT “What should we do”

<sup>3</sup> [Est6:3] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>4</sup> [Est6:3] MT, AT / LXX omits “for this”

<sup>5</sup> [Est6:3] MT, LXX / AT replaces “The king’s attendants...for him” with “And after they thought about it, the young men were envious of him, for fear of Haman lay in their bowels. And the king understood. And morning came.”

<sup>6</sup> [Est6:4] MT, AT / LXX adds

<sup>7</sup> [Est6:4] MT, LXX / AT “is outside”

<sup>8</sup> [Est6:4] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>9</sup> [Est6:4] MT, LXX / AT “had come early”

<sup>10</sup> [Est6:4] MT / LXX, AT omits “the outer court of the king’s palace”

<sup>11</sup> [Est6:5] MT, LXX / Luc, Josephus add

<sup>12</sup> [Est6:5] MT, LXX / AT omits “he had raised...in the court.”

<sup>13</sup> [Est6:5] MT / LXX “Call him,” the king said” / AT “And the king said to bring him in.”

<sup>14</sup> [Est6:6] MT, AT [“he” instead of “Haman”] / LXX “And the king said to Haman”

<sup>15</sup> [Est6:6] MT, LXX, AT / Josephus adds

<sup>16</sup> [Est6:6] MT / LXX “man whom I wish to honor” / AT “man who esteems the king, whom the king wishes to honor.”

<sup>17</sup> [Est6:6] MT / LXX “Haman thought within himself” / AT “Haman reasoned, saying”

<sup>18</sup> [Est6:7] MT / LXX “So he replied to the king” / AT “So Haman replied”

<sup>19</sup> [Est6:8] MT, AT / LXX “honor, let the king’s servants bring”

<sup>20</sup> [Est6:8] MT, AT / LXX “linen”

<sup>21</sup> [Est6:8] MT, AT, LXX / Josephus adds

<sup>22</sup> [Est6:8] MT / LXX “which the king wears” / AT omits altogether

<sup>23</sup> [Est6:8] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>24</sup> [Est6:8] MT / LXX, AT “which the king rides” (omitting “when the...his head”)

<sup>25</sup> [Est6:9] MT / LXX “And it” / AT “And these things”

<sup>26</sup> [Est6:9] MT / LXX, AT “friends”

<sup>27</sup> [Est6:9] MT, LXX / AT omits “the king wishes to honor”

<sup>28</sup> [Est6:9] MT / LXX “horse, and cry out through the public square of the city, saying” / AT “horse, and go around the city before him, crying out”

<sup>29</sup> [Est6:9] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>30</sup> [Est6:10] MT, AT / LXX replaces “Make haste!...proposed” with “You have spoken well.”

<sup>31</sup> [Est6:10] MT / LXX “who serves in the court” / AT “who is sitting at the gate” /

<sup>32</sup> [Est6:10] MT / LXX “And do not omit a single word of what you have spoken.” / AT “And do not let your word be transgressed.”

<sup>33</sup> [Est6:10] MT, LXX / AT adds / Josephus instead adds “Now when Haman heard these words, which were contrary to all his expectations, he was oppressed (variant “confused”) in spirit and stricken with helplessness”

<sup>34</sup> [Est6:11] MT, LXX / AT adds “showing reverence...And Haman” (supported by Josephus)

horseback through the public square of the city,<sup>1</sup> and cried out before him, saying,<sup>2</sup> “This is what is done for the man who esteems the king,<sup>3</sup> whom the king wishes to honor!”

**12** Mordecai then returned to the royal gate,<sup>4</sup> while Haman hurried<sup>5</sup> home, his head covered in grief. **13** When he told his wife Zeresh and all his friends<sup>6</sup> everything that had happened to him, his advisers<sup>7</sup> and his wife Zeresh said to him,<sup>8</sup> “If Mordecai, before whom you are beginning to fall, is of the Judean race, you will not prevail against him, but will surely fall before him,<sup>9</sup> for God is with him.”<sup>10</sup>

**14** While they were speaking with him, the king’s eunuchs<sup>11</sup> arrived and hurried Haman<sup>12</sup> off to the banquet Esther had prepared.<sup>13</sup> And because of this, he was cheered up. And when he had traveled the distance, he reclined with them on time.<sup>14</sup>

## CHAPTER 7

So the king and Haman went to the banquet<sup>15</sup> with Queen Esther.<sup>16</sup> **2** Again, on this second day, during the drinking of the wine,<sup>17</sup> the king said to Esther, “What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted to you. And what is your request? It shall be honored<sup>18</sup> for you,<sup>19</sup> even if it is half the kingdom.”

**3** Esther struggled with her reply, because the adversary was before her eyes. And God gave her courage as she called upon him.<sup>20</sup> Then Queen Esther<sup>21</sup> answered and<sup>22</sup> said, “If I have found favor with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty,<sup>23</sup> I ask that my life<sup>24</sup> be spared, and I beg that you spare the lives of my people.<sup>25</sup> **4** For my people and I have been delivered to destruction, slaughter, and extinction.<sup>26</sup> If we were to be *merely* sold into slavery, I would remain silent;<sup>27</sup> but as it is, the enemy will be unable to compensate for the harm done to the king.”<sup>28</sup>

**5** Then King Xerxes became angry and said to Queen Esther,<sup>29</sup> “Who and where<sup>30</sup> is the man who has dared to do this?”<sup>31</sup>

But when the queen saw that it seemed terribly offensive to the king, and that he hated evil, she said, “Do not be angry, my lord! For it is enough that I have found your conciliation. Enjoy your meal, O King, and tomorrow I will do according to your word.”

But the king urged her to tell him who was so arrogant to do this. And he promised with an oath to do for her whatever she wished.

**6** So Esther was emboldened and<sup>32</sup> replied, “The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Est6:11] MT / AT “And Haman led the horse outside”

<sup>2</sup> [Est6:11] MT, AT / LXX adds

<sup>3</sup> [Est6:10] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>4</sup> [Est6:12] MT / LXX “to the court” / AT “to his home”

<sup>5</sup> [Est6:12] MT / LXX, AT omits “hurried”

<sup>6</sup> [Est6:13] MT / LXX omits “all” / AT omits “and all his friends”

<sup>7</sup> [Est6:13] MT, AT / LXX “friends”

<sup>8</sup> [Est6:13] MT, LXX / AT omits “to him”

<sup>9</sup> [Est6:13] MT / LXX “are beginning to be humiliated, you will fall when you fall, and you will never be able to withstand him” / AT “Ever since you spoke evil about him, evil things have been coming to you; be quiet”

<sup>10</sup> [Est6:13] MT, Vul / LXX, AT, OL, Eth, Coptic, Josephus add

<sup>11</sup> [Est6:14] MT, LXX / AT “, someone” / Josephus “, Esther’s eunuchs”

<sup>12</sup> [Est6:14] MT, LXX / AT “him”

<sup>13</sup> [Est6:14] MT, LXX / AT omits “had prepared”

<sup>14</sup> [Est6:14] MT, LXX / AT adds / Josephus adds here “But Harbona, one of the eunuchs, seeing the gibbet which had been set up at Haman’s house and prepared for Mordecai, inquired of one of the servants for whom they had made this ready. And, learning that it was for the queen’s uncle, he, for the time being, held his peace.”

<sup>15</sup> [Est7:1] MT / LXX “went in to drink” / AT omits “So the king... Queen Esther.”

<sup>16</sup> [Est7:1] MT / LXX “with the queen”

<sup>17</sup> [Est7:2] MT, LXX / AT “As the drinking advanced”

<sup>18</sup> [Est7:2] MT / LXX “What is it, Queen Esther? What is your petition, and what is your request? It shall be *done*” / AT “What is the danger? And what is your petition?”

<sup>19</sup> [Est7:2] LXX, OL / MT omits “for you”

<sup>20</sup> [Est7:2] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>21</sup> [Est7:3] MT / LXX “Then she” / AT “Then Esther”

<sup>22</sup> [Est7:3] MT, LXX / AT omits “answered and”

<sup>23</sup> [Est7:3] MT / LXX “If I have found favor with the king” / AT “If it pleases the king, and the decision is good in his heart”

<sup>24</sup> [Est7:3] MT, LXX / AT “people”

<sup>25</sup> [Est7:3] MT, LXX / AT “nation”

<sup>26</sup> [Est7:4] MT / LXX “delivered to destruction, plunder, and slavery.” / AT “delivered into slavery, and their young children for plunder.”

<sup>27</sup> [Est7:4] MT, Eth, LXX similar / AT “...slavery, and their young children for plunder. But I did not want to tell you, lest I trouble my lord.”

<sup>28</sup> [Est7:4] MT / LXX “for the slanderer is not worthy of the court of the king.” / AT “For the man who did evil against us has changed his manner.” / Targ “for the oppressor is not of value and profit to the damage of the king” / Josephus “that would be an endurable evil”

<sup>29</sup> [Est7:5] MT / LXX “Then the king said” / AT “Then the king became angry and said”

<sup>30</sup> [Est7:5] MT / LXX, AT omits “and where”

<sup>31</sup> [Est7:5] MT, LXX / AT “dared to humiliate the sign of my rule, so as to disregard fear of you”

<sup>32</sup> [Est7:5-6] MT, LXX / AT adds “When the queen... was emboldened and”

At this, Haman was seized with dread of the king and queen.<sup>2</sup> **7** The king left the banquet in anger and went into the palace garden,<sup>3</sup> but Haman stayed to beg Queen Esther for his life, since he saw that the king had decided on his doom.<sup>4</sup>

**8** When the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall,<sup>5</sup> Haman had thrown himself on the couch on which Esther was reclining; and the king exclaimed,<sup>6</sup> “A crime against my kingdom is not enough for you?”<sup>7</sup> Will he<sup>8</sup> also violate the queen<sup>9</sup> while she is with me in my own house!<sup>10</sup> Let Haman be led away, and do not let him live!”<sup>11</sup> Scarcely had the king spoken when the face of Haman was covered over.<sup>12</sup>

**9** Harbona,<sup>13</sup> one of the eunuchs who attended the king,<sup>14</sup> said, “Look, at the house of Haman stands<sup>15</sup> a gibbet 50<sup>16</sup> cubits high. Haman prepared it for Mordecai,<sup>17</sup> who gave the report that benefited the king. Therefore, lord, order that he himself be hanged upon it.”<sup>18</sup>

And the king answered, “Hang him on it.”

**10** So they hanged Haman on the gibbet which he had made ready for Mordecai, and king’s anger was appeased.<sup>19</sup>

## CHAPTER 8 (includes Addition E)

That same day, King Xerxes gave the house of Haman, enemy of the Judeans, to Queen Esther;<sup>20</sup> and Mordecai was admitted to the king’s presence, for Esther had revealed his relationship to her. **2** The king removed his signet ring from Haman, and transferred it into the keeping of Mordecai; and Esther put Mordecai in charge of the house of Haman.<sup>21</sup>

**3** In another audience with the king, Esther<sup>22</sup> fell at his feet and tearfully<sup>23</sup> implored him to revoke the harm done by Haman the Agagite,<sup>24</sup> and the plan he had devised<sup>25</sup> against the Judeans. **4** The king stretched forth the golden scepter to Esther. So she rose. And standing in his presence, **5** Esther said, “If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and it seems proper before the king, and if I am pleasing in his eyes,<sup>26</sup> let a document be issued to revoke the letters which that schemer Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite,<sup>27</sup> wrote for the destruction of the Judeans in all the royal provinces.<sup>28</sup> **6** For how can I witness the evil that is to befall my people,<sup>29</sup> and how can I behold<sup>30</sup> the destruction of my race?”

**7** Then King Xerxes said to Queen Esther<sup>31</sup> and to Mordecai the Judean,<sup>32</sup> “Now that I have given Esther the house of Haman,<sup>33</sup> and they<sup>34</sup> have hanged him on the gibbet with all his house<sup>35</sup> because he attacked the

<sup>1</sup> [Est7:6] MT / LXX omits “and enemy” / AT “, ‘The liar is this wicked Haman, your Friend.”

<sup>2</sup> [Est7:6] MT, LXX / AT omits “At this...and queen”

<sup>3</sup> [Est7:7] MT (supported by Josephus) / LXX omits “in anger” & “palace” / AT “The king, becoming angry and filled with rage, jumped up and was pacing around.”

<sup>4</sup> [Est7:7] MT / LXX “but Haman entreated the queen, since he saw himself in deep trouble.” / AT “and Haman was terrified and prostrated himself at the feet of Queen Esther, who still reclined on her couch.”

<sup>5</sup> [Est7:8] MT / LXX omits “palace” & “to the banquet hall” / AT omits “from the palace garden” & “hall”

<sup>6</sup> [Est7:8] MT / LXX “Haman...couch, entreating the queen, and the king said” / AT “he saw this and said”

<sup>7</sup> [Est7:8] MT, LXX / AT adds / Josephus instead adds “O basest of all men”

<sup>8</sup> [Est7:8] MT / LXX, At “you”

<sup>9</sup> [Est7:8] MT “the queen” / LXX, AT “my wife”

<sup>10</sup> [Est7:8] MT, LXX / AT “in my presence”

<sup>11</sup> [Est7:8] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>12</sup> [Est7:8] MT / LXX “When Haman heard this, he covered over his face.” / AT “And so he was led away.” / Targum “was covered over with shame”

<sup>13</sup> [Est7:9] MT / LXX “Bougathan” / AT “Agathas” / Josephus “Sabuchadas”

<sup>14</sup> [Est7:9] MT, LXX / AT “one of his servants”

<sup>15</sup> [Est7:9] MT, LXX / AT “Look, in his courtyard is”

<sup>16</sup> [Est7:9] some Josephus “60”

<sup>17</sup> [Est7:9] MT / LXX “Haman prepared this gibbet for Mordecai” / AT “Haman cut it down to hang Mordecai”

<sup>18</sup> [Est7:10] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>19</sup> [Est7:10] MT, LXX / AT replaces “So they...appeased” with “And the king removed the signet ring from his hand, and his life was sealed with it.”

<sup>20</sup> [Est8:1] MT / LXX “have all the belongings of Haman the slanderer to Esther”

<sup>21</sup> [Est8:2] MT / LXX “charge of everything of Haman’s”

<sup>22</sup> [Est8:3] MT / LXX “she”

<sup>23</sup> [Est8:3] MT / LXX omits “tearfully”

<sup>24</sup> [Est8:3] MT / LXX omits “the Agagite”

<sup>25</sup> [Est8:5] MT / LXX “and all that he had done”

<sup>26</sup> [Est8:5] MT / LXX “If it pleases you, and if I have found favor”

<sup>27</sup> [Est8:5] MT / LXX “which Haman”

<sup>28</sup> [Est8:5] MT / LXX “Judeans in your kingdom”

<sup>29</sup> [Est8:5] MT / LXX “witness the affliction of my people”

<sup>30</sup> [Est8:6] MT / LXX “survive”

<sup>31</sup> [Est8:6] MT / LXX omits “Xerxes” & “Queen”

<sup>32</sup> [Est8:7] MT, Vul / LXX, AT, OL omit “and to Mordecai the Judean”

<sup>33</sup> [Est8:7] MT / LXX “given you everything belonging to Haman”

<sup>34</sup> [Est8:7] MT / LXX “I”

<sup>35</sup> [Est8:7] MT, LXX / OL adds (erroneously)

Judeans, what do you still seek?<sup>1</sup> **8** you in turn may write in the king's<sup>2</sup> name what you see fit concerning the Judeans<sup>3</sup> and seal the letter with the royal<sup>4</sup> signet ring. For whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the royal signet ring cannot be revoked."

**9** At that time, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month, Sivan of the same year,<sup>5</sup> the royal scribes were summoned. Exactly as Mordecai dictated,<sup>6</sup> they wrote to the Judeans and to the satraps, governors, and officials of the 127 provinces from Hodu to Cush: to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language, and to the Judeans in their own script and language.<sup>7</sup> **10** These letters, which he wrote in the name of King Xerxes<sup>8</sup> and and sealed with the royal<sup>9</sup> signet ring, were sent by mounted couriers riding thoroughbred royal steeds.<sup>10</sup>

**11** In these letters, the king authorized the Judeans in each and every city to group together and defend their lives, and to kill, destroy, wipe out, along with their women and children, every armed group of any nation or province which should attack them, and to seize their goods as spoil<sup>11</sup> **12** throughout the provinces of King Xerxes,<sup>12</sup> on a single day, the 13<sup>th</sup> day<sup>13</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, Adar.<sup>14</sup>

**13** *The following is a copy of the letter:*<sup>15</sup>

*King Xerxes the Great to the governors of the provinces in the 127 satrapies from Hodu to Cush, and to those responsible for our interests: Greetings!*

**14** *Many have become the more ambitious the more they were showered with honors through the bountiful generosity of their patrons. 15 Not only do they seek to do harm to our subjects, but incapable of bearing such greatness, they even begin plotting against their own benefactors. 16 Not only do they drive out<sup>16</sup> gratitude from among men, but with the arrogant boastfulness of those to whom goodness has no meaning, they suppose<sup>17</sup> they will escape the vindictive judgment of the all-seeing God.<sup>18</sup>*

**17** *Often, too, the fair speech of friends entrusted with the administration of affairs has induced many placed in authority to become accomplices<sup>19</sup> in the shedding of innocent blood, and has involved them in irreparable calamities 18 by deceiving with malicious slander the sincere good will of rulers.*

**19** *This can be verified in the ancient records that have been handed down to us,<sup>20</sup> but more fully when one considers the wicked deeds perpetrated in your midst by the pestilential influence<sup>21</sup> of those undeserving<sup>22</sup> of authority. 20 We must provide for the future, so as<sup>23</sup> to render the kingdom undisturbed and peaceful for all men,<sup>24</sup> 21 taking no<sup>25</sup> advantage of changing conditions<sup>26</sup> and deciding, always with equitable treatment,<sup>27</sup> matters coming to our attention.*

<sup>1</sup> [Est8:7] MT / LXX adds (and begins the sentence with "If" instead of "Now that")

<sup>2</sup> [Est8:7] MT / LXX "in my name"

<sup>3</sup> [Est8:7] MT / LXX omits "concerning the Judeans"

<sup>4</sup> [Est8:7] MT / LXX "with my"

<sup>5</sup> [Est8:9] MT / LXX "of the 1st month, Nisan, of the same year"

<sup>6</sup> [Est8:9] MT / LXX omits "Exactly as Mordecai dictated"

<sup>7</sup> [Est8:9] MT / LXX omits "and to the Judeans in their own script and language"

<sup>8</sup> [Est8:10] MT / LXX "They were written by the king"

<sup>9</sup> [Est8:10] MT / LXX omits "royal"

<sup>10</sup> [Est8:10] MT / LXX "and they sent the letters by couriers"

<sup>11</sup> [Est8:11] MT / LXX replaces "In these letters....spoil" with "In these, he ordered them to live in accordance with their *own* laws in every city, both to help each other, and to deal with their enemies, and those who attacked them, as they pleased"

<sup>12</sup> [Est8:12] MT / LXX "throughout the kingdom of Xerxes"

<sup>13</sup> [Est8:12] OL "14th"

<sup>14</sup> [Est8:1~12] AT replaces "That same day...Adar" with "And the king said to Esther, 'He even planned to hang Mordecai, who saved me from the hand of the eunuchs? Did he not know that Esther is of his race?' So the king called Mordecai and granted him all that belonged to Haman. And he said to him, 'What do you want? I will do it for you.' And Mordecai said, 'That you revoke Haman's letter.' So the king entrusted him with the affairs of the kingdom. Then Esther said to the king on the following day, 'Allow me to punish my enemies with bloodshed.' So Queen Esther also appealed to the king against Haman's children, that they too should die with their father. And the king said, 'Let it be done.' So she struck the enemies in great numbers. And in Susa, the king made an agreement with the queen to kill men; and he said, 'Behold, I give them to you to hang.' And so it was done."

<sup>15</sup> [Est8:13] LXX / AT "So he wrote the following letter:"

<sup>16</sup> [Est8:16] LXX / AT "they take away"

<sup>17</sup> [Est8:16] LXX / AT "imagine"

<sup>18</sup> [Est8:16] LXX / AT "of the righteous all-ruling Judge"

<sup>19</sup> [Est8:17] LXX / AT "Often to, after having been placed in authority with friends entrusted with the administration of affairs have made them liable"

<sup>20</sup> [Est8:19] AT / LXX "that we have received"

<sup>21</sup> [Est8:19] LXX / AT "by the cruelty"

<sup>22</sup> [Est8:19] LXX / AT omits "undeserving"

<sup>23</sup> [Est8:20] LXX / AT "future, and to"

<sup>24</sup> [Est8:20] LXX / AT "nations"

<sup>25</sup> [Est8:21] LXX / AT, OL, Vul, Coptic add

<sup>26</sup> [Est8:21] LXX(B), OL, Vul, Coptic / AT "of slanderers"

<sup>27</sup> [Est8:21] LXX / AT "conditions and fairly treating"



**22** For instance, Haman, son of Hammedatha, an Agagite<sup>1</sup> in spirit and race,<sup>2</sup> certainly not of Persian blood,<sup>3</sup> and very different from us in generosity, was hospitably received by us.<sup>4</sup> **23** He so far fully<sup>5</sup> enjoyed the goodwill that we have toward all peoples that he was proclaimed ‘father of the king,’ before whom everyone was to bow down; he attained the rank second to the royal throne.<sup>6</sup> **24** But, unequal to this dignity, he strove to deprive us of kingdom and of our breath; **25** and by weaving intricate webs of deceit, he demanded the destruction of Mordecai, our savior and constant benefactor,<sup>7</sup> and of Esther, our blameless royal consort,<sup>8</sup> together with their whole race. **26** For by such measures he he hoped to catch us defenseless in alienation<sup>9</sup> and to transfer the rule of the Persians to the Agagites.<sup>10</sup> **27** But<sup>11</sup> we find that the Judeans, who were doomed to extinction<sup>12</sup> by this chief-criminal, are not evildoers, but rather are governed by most righteous laws **28** and are even the children of the Most High, the living God of majesty,<sup>13</sup> who has maintained the kingdom in a flourishing condition for us and for our ancestors.<sup>14</sup>

**29** You will do well, then, to ignore the letters previously sent by Haman, son of Hammedatha,<sup>15</sup> **30** for he who composed it has been hanged, together with his entire household,<sup>16</sup> before the gates of Susa. This is how God, who always governs everything, has swiftly brought upon him the punishment which he deserved.<sup>17</sup>

**31** You shall exhibit a copy of this letter publicly<sup>18</sup> in every place, to certify that the Judeans may follow their own laws,<sup>19</sup> **32** and that you may help<sup>20</sup> them on the day set for their ruin, And it has been decided by the Judeans throughout the kingdom to observe the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, Adar,<sup>21</sup> to defend themselves against those who attack them, and to also hold a feast on the 15<sup>th</sup>. **33** For God, the ruler of all, has turned that day for them from one of destruction of the chosen race into one of joy.<sup>22</sup> **34** Therefore, you too must celebrate this memorable day among your designated feasts with all rejoicing,<sup>23</sup> **35** so that both now and<sup>24</sup> in the future it may be, for us and<sup>25</sup> for loyal<sup>26</sup> Persians, a celebration of victory,<sup>27</sup> and for those who plot against us,<sup>28</sup> a reminder of destruction.

**36** Every city and province, without exception,<sup>29</sup> that does not observe this decree shall be ruthlessly destroyed with fire and sword, so that it will not be left merely untrodden by men, but even shunned by wild beasts and birds forever.<sup>30</sup>

**37** A copy of the letter to be promulgated as law in each and every province was published among all the peoples, so that all the Judeans might be prepared on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.<sup>31</sup> **38**

<sup>1</sup> [Est8:22] Emendation (LXX always translates “Agagite” to “Makedonian”) / LXX “a Makedonian” / Josephus “an Amalekite”

<sup>2</sup> [Est8:22] LXX, Vul / AT “, the Agagite” (lit. “, the Bougaion”) / Vul adds “in spirit and race”

<sup>3</sup> [Est8:22] LXX / AT “thinking”

<sup>4</sup> [Est8:22] LXX / AT omits “was hospitably received by us”

<sup>5</sup> [Est8:23] LXX / AT adds

<sup>6</sup> [Est8:23] LXX / AT “thrones”

<sup>7</sup> [Est8:25] LXX / AT “our constant savior”

<sup>8</sup> [Est8:25] LXX / AT “Esther, his blameless partner”

<sup>9</sup> [Est8:26] LXX / AT, OL adds

<sup>10</sup> [Est8:26] Emendation (LXX always translates “Agagite” to “Makedonian”) / LXX “to the Makedonians” / Josephus “to others”

<sup>11</sup> [Est8:27] LXX / AT “Therefore”

<sup>12</sup> [Est8:27] LXX / AT “you”

<sup>13</sup> [Est8:28] LXX / AT “and are even children of the one, true God” / Josephus “and are attached to the God”

<sup>14</sup> [Est8:28] LXX / AT “condition for us until now.”

<sup>15</sup> [Est8:29] LXX / AT omits “son of Hammedatha”

<sup>16</sup> [Est8:30] LXX / AT omits “together with his entire household”

<sup>17</sup> [Est8:30] LXX / AT “Thus the judge, who always sees everything, gave him the deserved punishment”

<sup>18</sup> [Est8:31] LXX / AT replaces “So let a copy of this letter be exhibited”

<sup>19</sup> [Est8:31] LXX(A), AT, OL, Josephus / other LXX “customs”

<sup>20</sup> [Est8:32] LXX / AT “strengthen”

<sup>21</sup> [Est8:32] LXX / AT “the 14th day of the month, which is Adar”

<sup>22</sup> [Est8:33] LXX / AT “For in those days the Almighty provided them with deliverance and rejoicing.”

<sup>23</sup> [Est8:34] AT, Josephus / LXX adds

<sup>24</sup> [Est8:35] LXX / AT replaces “so that both now and” with “And now”

<sup>25</sup> [Est8:35] most LXX / some LXX “for you and” / AT omits altogether

<sup>26</sup> [Est8:35] LXX / AT “obedient”

<sup>27</sup> [Est8:35] LXX / AT omits “a celebration of victory”

<sup>28</sup> [Est8:35] LXX / AT “them”

<sup>29</sup> [Est8:36] LXX / AT omits “without exception”

<sup>30</sup> [Est8:36] LXX(A), AT omit “but even” & “forever”

<sup>31</sup> [Est8:37] MT / LXX “Now, let copies be posted conspicuously in all the kingdom, so that all the Judeans might be prepared on that day to fight against their enemies.”

Couriers mounted on royal steeds sped forth in haste at the king's order,<sup>1</sup> and the decree was also promulgated in the stronghold of Susa.<sup>2</sup>

So Mordecai sent out letters and sealed them with the king's signet ring, instructing his people to each remain in their own land and celebrate a feast to God. And the letter which Mordecai sent contained the following things:

Haman sent letters to you containing the following:

"Hasten quickly to send the disobedient nation of the Judeans to me for destruction."

But I, Mordecai, inform you that the one who did this has been hung at the gates of Susa, and his household has been dispatched. For this man wished to kill us on the thirteenth of the month, that is, Adar.<sup>3</sup>

**39** And Mordecai left the king's presence<sup>4</sup> clothed in a royal robe of violet and of white cotton,<sup>5</sup> with a large large crown of gold<sup>6</sup> and a cloak<sup>7</sup> of crimson byssus. And the city of Susa rejoiced and was glad.<sup>8</sup> **40** And there there was splendor and merriment for the Judeans, exultation and triumph.<sup>9</sup> **41** In each and every province and in each and every city, wherever the king's order arrived,<sup>10</sup> there was merriment and exultation, banqueting and feasting for the Judeans.<sup>11</sup> And many of the peoples of the land were circumcised and became Judeans,<sup>12</sup> for they were seized with a fear of the Judeans.<sup>13</sup>

## CHAPTER 9

When the day arrived on which the order decreed by the king was to be carried out, the 13<sup>th</sup> day<sup>14</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, Adar, on which the enemies of the Judeans had expected to become masters of them, the situation was reversed: the Judeans became masters of their enemies. **2** The Judeans mustered in their cities throughout the provinces of King Xerxes to attack those who sought to do them harm, and no one could withstand them, but all peoples were seized with a fear of them.<sup>15</sup> **3** Moreover, all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, governors, and royal procurators supported<sup>16</sup> the Judeans from fear of Mordecai; **4** for Mordecai was powerful in the royal palace, and the report was spreading through all the provinces that he was continually growing in power.<sup>17</sup>

**5** The Judeans struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them; they did to their enemies as they pleased.<sup>18</sup> **6** In the stronghold<sup>19</sup> of Susa, the Judeans killed and destroyed<sup>20</sup> 500<sup>21</sup> men. **7** They also killed Parshandatha,<sup>22</sup> Dalphon,<sup>23</sup> Aspatha, **8** Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,<sup>24</sup> **9** Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha,<sup>25</sup> **10** the ten sons of Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite,<sup>1</sup> the foe of the Judeans. However, they they did not engage<sup>2</sup> in plundering.

<sup>1</sup> [Est8:38] MT / LXX "Horsemen sped forth in haste to perform the king's order"

<sup>2</sup> [Est8:38] MT / LXX "decree was also posted in Susa" / AT replaces "A copy...of Susa" with "And a public notice containing these things was also posted in Susa."

<sup>3</sup> [Est8:38] MT, LXX / AT adds

<sup>4</sup> [Est8:39] MT / LXX, AT omits "the king's presence"

<sup>5</sup> [Est8:39] MT / LXX, AT omits "of violet and of white cotton"

<sup>6</sup> [Est8:39] MT / LXX, Josephus omits "large" / AT omits "a large crown of gold"

<sup>7</sup> [Est8:39] MT / LXX, AT "diadem" / Josephus "necklace" (and omits "of crimson byssus")

<sup>8</sup> [Est8:39] MT / LXX, AT "And when the people in Susa saw him, they rejoiced."

<sup>9</sup> [Est8:40] MT / LXX "And there was splendor and merriment for the Judeans" / AT "And there was splendor, drinking *and* feasting for the Judeans."

<sup>10</sup> [Est8:41] MT / LXX "wherever the ordinance was posted, wherever the proclamation was made"

<sup>11</sup> [Est8:41] MT, LXX(similar) / AT omits "In each...feasting for the Judeans."

<sup>12</sup> [Est8:41] MT / LXX, OL "And many of the nations were circumcised and became Judeans" / AT "And many of the Judeans were circumcised" / Targum "...were converted" / Josephus "...were circumcised"

<sup>13</sup> [Est8:41] MT / LXX "for fear of the Judeans" / AT "for they feared them"

<sup>14</sup> [Est9:1] MT, LXX, AT, some Josephus / some Josephus "14<sup>th</sup> day"

<sup>15</sup> [Est9:1~2] MT / LXX replaces "When the day...fear of them" with "For the letters written by the king arrived, on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, which is Adar. In that day, the enemies of the Judeans perished, for no one resisted due to fear of them." / AT omits altogether

<sup>16</sup> [Est9:3] MT / LXX, AT "esteemed"

<sup>17</sup> [Est9:3] MT "for Mordecai...power." / LXX "For it turned out that the king's ordinance was referred to by name throughout all the king." / AT "And in Susa, it turned out that Haman was referred to by name, and so were the opponents throughout the whole kingdom."

<sup>18</sup> [Est9:5] MT / LXX omits "The Judeans struck...pleased."

<sup>19</sup> [Est9:6] MT / LXX "the city of" / AT omits altogether

<sup>20</sup> [Est9:6] MT / LXX, AT omits "and destroyed"

<sup>21</sup> [Est9:6] MT, LXX, Josephus / AT "700"

<sup>22</sup> [Est9:7] MT, LXX(A) similar / LXX(B) "Parshan and Nestain"

<sup>23</sup> [Est9:17] MT, LXX "Dalphon" / AT "and his brother"

<sup>24</sup> [Est9:8] MT "Porathai, Adalia, Aridatha" / LXX "Poradatha, Barea, Sarbacha" / AT "Gagapordathia"

<sup>25</sup> [Est9:9] MT "Paramashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vejezatha" / LXX "Marmasima, Ruphaeus, Arsaeus, and Zabuthaeus" / AT "Marmasima and Izathouth"

**11** On the same day, when the number of those killed in the stronghold of Susa<sup>3</sup> was reported to the king, **12** the king said to Queen<sup>4</sup> Esther, “In the stronghold<sup>5</sup> of Susa the Judeans have killed and destroyed<sup>6</sup> 500 men, as well as the ten sons of Haman.<sup>7</sup> What must they have done in the other royal provinces! Now what is your petition? It shall be granted to you. And what further request do you have? It shall be honored.”<sup>8</sup>

**13** So Esther said to the king,<sup>9</sup> “If it pleases your majesty,<sup>10</sup> let the Judeans in Susa<sup>11</sup> be permitted again tomorrow to act according to today’s decree, and let<sup>12</sup> the ten sons of Haman be hanged on gibbets.”<sup>13</sup>

**14** So the king gave an order to this effect, and the decree was published in Susa. So the ten sons of Haman were hanged on gibbets.<sup>14</sup> **15** And the Judeans in Susa mustered again, on the 14th of the month of Adar, and killed 300 men in Susa.<sup>15</sup> However, they did not engage in plundering.

**16** The other Judeans, who dwelt in the royal provinces, also mustered and defended themselves, and obtained rest from their enemies.<sup>16</sup> **17** On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Adar,<sup>17</sup> they killed 75,000<sup>18</sup> of their foes,<sup>19</sup> but they did not engage in plundering. On the 14th of the month they rested, and made it a day of feasting<sup>20</sup> and rejoicing. **18** (The Judeans in the city of<sup>21</sup> Susa, however, mustered on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of the month. But on the 15<sup>th</sup> they rested, and made it a day of<sup>22</sup> feasting<sup>23</sup> and rejoicing.) **19** That is why the rural Judeans, who dwell in villages,<sup>24</sup> celebrate the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month of Adar as a day of rejoicing and feasting, a holiday on which they send gifts of food to one another.<sup>25</sup> But those living in the metropolitan centers also celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> of Adar with joy, sending out gifts to the poor.<sup>26</sup>

**20** Mordecai recorded these events and sent letters<sup>27</sup> to all the Judeans, both near and far, in all the provinces of King Xerxes. **21** He ordered them to celebrate every year both<sup>28</sup> the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month of Adar<sup>29</sup> **22** as the days on which the Judeans obtained rest from their enemies and as the month (which was Adar)<sup>30</sup> which was turned for them from sorrow into joy, and from mourning into festivity. They were to observe these days with feasting<sup>31</sup> and gladness,<sup>32</sup> sending food to one another<sup>33</sup> and gifts to the poor and orphans and widows.<sup>34</sup> **23** So the Judeans took upon themselves for the future this observance which they instituted at the written direction of Mordecai.<sup>35</sup>

**24** Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the foe of all the Judeans,<sup>36</sup> had planned to destroy them<sup>37</sup> and had cast the pur (or ‘lot’) for the time of their defeat and destruction.<sup>1</sup> **25** Yet, when she<sup>2</sup> went before the king,

<sup>1</sup> [Est9:10] MT / LXX, AT adds (lit. “the Bougaion” which is always the LXX equivalent of “Agagite”)

<sup>2</sup> [Est9:10] MT / LXX, AT “they engaged”

<sup>3</sup> [Est9:11] MT / LXX omits “the stronghold of” / AT omits “On the same day...to the king.” / some Josephus have “in the city” (instead of “in the stronghold of Susa”) / other Josephus omit “in the city” entirely

<sup>4</sup> [Est9:12] MT / LXX, AT omits “Queen”

<sup>5</sup> [Est9:12] MT / LXX “city”

<sup>6</sup> [Est9:12] MT / LXX omits “and destroyed”

<sup>7</sup> [Est9:12] MT / LXX omits “as well...Haman” / AT omits “In the...Haman”

<sup>8</sup> [Est9:12] MT / LXX “Now what more do you ask? It shall be yours.” / AT omits altogether

<sup>9</sup> [Est9:13] MT, AT / LXX adds

<sup>10</sup> [Est9:13] MT / LXX, AT omits “If it pleases your majesty”

<sup>11</sup> [Est9:13] MT / LXX, AT omits “in Susa”

<sup>12</sup> [Est9:13] MT / LXX “to act likewise, so that” & omits “on gibbets”

<sup>13</sup> [Est9:13] AT “So Esther said to the king, “Let the Judeans destroy whomever they wish, and to plunder!”

<sup>14</sup> [Est9:14] MT “So the king...” / three Hebrew, Syr add “on gibbets” / LXX reads “So he permitted it to be done, and handed over the bodies of Haman’s sons to the Judeans of the city to be hanged.”

<sup>15</sup> [Est9:15] MT / LXX omits “in Susa”

<sup>16</sup> [Est9:14~15] AT replaces “So the king gave an order...enemies” with only “And he consented.”

<sup>17</sup> [Est9:16] MT, LXX / AT omits “On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Adar”

<sup>18</sup> [Est9:16] MT, Syr, Josephus, Vul / LXX “15,000” / Luc “70,100”

<sup>19</sup> [Est9:16] MT / LXX “of them” / AT “men”

<sup>20</sup> [Est9:17] LXX “pleasure”

<sup>21</sup> [Est9:18] MT / LXX adds

<sup>22</sup> [Est9:18] MT / LXX “mustered also on the 14<sup>th</sup> and did not rest. They also celebrated the fifteenth with”

<sup>23</sup> [Est9:18] MT / LXX “pleasure”

<sup>24</sup> [Est9:19] MT / LXX “who are scattered in every land outside”

<sup>25</sup> [Est9:6~19] OL omits “They also killed Parshandatha...another.” / AT omits “but they...plundering. On...one another.”

<sup>26</sup> [Est9:19] MT / LXX adds

<sup>27</sup> [Est9:20] MT / LXX, AT “events in a book and sent it”

<sup>28</sup> [Est9:21] MT / LXX “to celebrate these joyful days, and to keep” / AT “to keep these days for hymns and rejoicing in the place of pain and grief”

<sup>29</sup> [Est9:21] MT, LXX / AT omits “of the month of Adar”

<sup>30</sup> [Est9:22] MT / LXX adds

<sup>31</sup> [Est9:22] MT / LXX “observe these holidays of marriage”

<sup>32</sup> [Est9:22] AT omits “as the days on which...and gladness”

<sup>33</sup> [Est9:22] MT / LXX “to their friends”

<sup>34</sup> [Est9:22] OL adds

<sup>35</sup> [Est9:23] MT / LXX “So the Judeans accepted just what Mordecai had written to them.”

<sup>36</sup> [Est9:24] MT / LXX omits “the foe of all the Judeans”

<sup>37</sup> [Est9:24] MT / LXX “had warred against them”

the king ordered in writing that the wicked plan Haman had devised<sup>3</sup> against the Judeans should instead be turned against Haman and that he and his sons should be hanged on gibbets.<sup>4</sup> **26** And so these days have been named ‘Purim’ after the word ‘pur’.<sup>5</sup>

This was how, due to everything that was contained in this letter, and due to what they had witnessed and experienced<sup>6</sup> in this affair, **27** the Judeans established and took upon themselves,<sup>7</sup> their descendants, and everyone who should join them, the inviolable obligation of celebrating these two days every year in the manner prescribed by this letter, and at the time appointed.<sup>8</sup> **28** These days were to be commemorated and kept in every generation, by every clan, in every province, and in every city. These days of Purim were never to fall into disuse among the Judeans, nor into oblivion among their descendants.

**29** Then Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai the Judean, wrote to confirm with full authority<sup>9</sup> this second<sup>10</sup> letter about Purim. **30** And he sent documents concerning peace and security to all the Judeans in the 127 provinces of Xerxes’ kingdom. **31** This was how these days of Purim were established, for their appointed time, which<sup>11</sup> Mordecai the Judean and Queen Esther had designated for the Judeans, just as they had previously enjoined upon themselves and upon their race the duty of fasting and supplication.<sup>12</sup> **32** The command of Esther confirmed these prescriptions for Purim and was recorded in the book.<sup>13</sup>

## CHAPTER 10 (includes Addition F)

King Xerxes laid tribute<sup>14</sup> on the land and on the islands of the sea. **2** All the acts of his power and valor, as well as a detailed account of the greatness of Mordecai, whom the king promoted, are recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia.<sup>15</sup> **3** The Judean<sup>16</sup> Mordecai was next in rank to King Xerxes, and he was great in the kingdom and<sup>17</sup> in high standing among the Judeans, and was regarded with favor by his many brethren, as the promoter of his people’s welfare and the herald of peace for his whole race.<sup>18</sup>

**4** *Then Mordecai said, “This is the work of God. I recall the dream I had about these very things, and not a single detail has been left unfulfilled.”<sup>19</sup> And he said,*

**5** *“The tiny spring that grew into a river, the light of the sun, the many waters.  
The river is Esther, whom the king married and made queen.”<sup>20</sup>*

*And The two dragons are myself and Haman.*

**6** *The nations are those who<sup>21</sup> assembled to destroy the name of<sup>22</sup> the Judeans.*

*The light of the sun is the revelation of God that appeared to the Judeans; this is the judgment.<sup>23</sup>  
But my people is Israel, who cried to God and was saved.*

<sup>1</sup> [Est9:24] MT / LXX “and had made a decree and had cast the lot to destroy them”

<sup>2</sup> [Est9:25] MT, Vul, Sur, Tar / LXX “he” (see below for full variant)

<sup>3</sup> [Est9:25] LXX “and how he went before the king, telling him to hang Mordecai, but all the calamities he had devised”

<sup>4</sup> [Est9:24–25] MT / AT omits “So the Judeans...hanged on gibbets.” / LXX omits “on gibbets” / OL omits “Haman, son of Hammedatha...gibbets.”

<sup>5</sup> [Est9:26] MT / LXX “named Purim, because of the lots (because in their language they are called pur) / AT “named Purim, because of the lots that fell on these days as a memorial.”

<sup>6</sup> [Est9:26] MT / LXX “had suffered”

<sup>7</sup> [Est9:27] MT “the Judeans established and took upon themselves” / LXX “he [Mordecai] established it, and the Judeans took upon themselves” / AT “and they welcomed them.”

<sup>8</sup> [Est9:23–27] MT / LXX “joined them, and surely not to do otherwise.” OL omits “Haman, son of Hammedath...the time appointed.” / AT omits “Thus, because of all...this affair” & “their descendants...recorded in the book.” (end of chapter)

<sup>9</sup> [Est9:29] MT / LXX “wrote everything they had done, and to confirm”

<sup>10</sup> [Est9:29] MT / LXX, Syr omit “second”

<sup>11</sup> [Est9:30] MT / LXX omits “And he sent documents...Purim which” (possibly by scribal error)

<sup>12</sup> [Est9:31] MT / LXX “race concerning their health and their plan.”

<sup>13</sup> [Est9:32] MT / LXX “And Esther established the matter by ordinance forever, and it was written for a memorial.”

<sup>14</sup> [Est10:1] MT / LXX, AT “The king wrote”

<sup>15</sup> [Est10:1–2] MT / LXX “The king recorded during his rule over both land and sea, both his strength and bravery, both the wealth and the glory of his kingdom; note that they have been recorded in the book of the kings of the Persians and the Medes as a memorial.” / AT “The king recorded the dues of the land and sea and his strength, both the riches and glory of his kingdom. And Mordecai extolled him and wrote in the books of the Persians and the Medes as a memorial.”

<sup>16</sup> [Est10:3] MT / LXX, AT omits “The Judean”

<sup>17</sup> [Est10:3] MT / LXX, AT adds

<sup>18</sup> [Est10:3] MT / (starting after “kingdom and”) LXX “and extolled by the Judeans. And being loved, he spent his life for his whole nation.” / AT “and loved by all the Judeans. He led them and bestowed glory on his whole nation.”

<sup>19</sup> [Est10:4] AT “God.” For he remembered the dream that he saw. And it was fulfilled. And he said,”

<sup>20</sup> [Est10:5] AT, OL “The tiny spring is Esther.”

<sup>21</sup> [Est10:6] AT, OL “Haman. The river is the nations that”

<sup>22</sup> [Est10:6] AT, OL omits “the name of”

<sup>23</sup> [Est10:6] AT, OL adds

7 “The Lord saved his people and delivered us from all these evils.<sup>1</sup> And God worked these signs and great<sup>2</sup> wonders, such as have not occurred among the nations. 8 For this purpose<sup>3</sup> he arranged two lots: one for the people of God, the second for all<sup>4</sup> the nations. And these two lots were fulfilled in the hours, the time, and to the day of judgment before God and<sup>5</sup> among all the nations. 9 God remembered his people and rendered justice to his inheritance. And all the people cried out in a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you, Lord, who remembers the covenants made with our fathers! Let it be!” Gathering together with joy and rejoicing<sup>6</sup> before God, they shall celebrate these days on the 14th and 15th<sup>7</sup> of the month Adar throughout all future generations of his people Israel.

#### LATE POSTSCRIPT

In the 4th year of the reign of Ptolemaios and Kleopatra, Dositheos, who said he was a priest and Levite, and his son Ptolemaios brought the present letter of Purim, saying that it was genuine and that Lysimachos, son of Ptolemaios, of the community of Jerusalem, had translated it.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> [Est10:7] AT omits “But my people is...all these evils.”

<sup>2</sup> [Est10:7] AT omits “great”

<sup>3</sup> [Est10:8] AT omits “For this purpose” (replaces with “And”)

<sup>4</sup> [Est10:8] AT omits “all”

<sup>5</sup> [Est10:8] AT “day of the lordship of the everlasting one”

<sup>6</sup> [Est10:9] AT “gladness”

<sup>7</sup> [Est10:9] one LXX omits “and the 15th”

<sup>8</sup> [Est10:10] LXX / all but one AT understandably omits “In the 4th...translated it.”