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  - <div type="introduction" canonical="false">
    <title>ABOUT THIS BOOK</title>
    <p>The story of Esther takes place in the city of Susa, in the winter
      palace of the Persian king. After King Xerxes divorced his queen,
      he chose a young Jewish woman named Esther as his new queen.
      She was an orphan but had been adopted and cared for by her
      cousin, Mordecai, who was given a job as a palace official.
      Mordecai warned her not to tell anyone that she was a Jew, and
      she obeyed.</p>
    <p>The king's highest official was a man named Haman. He hated
      the Jews, and he tricked the king into giving permission to have
      them all killed. The rest of the book tells how Esther risked her
      own life to save the lives of her people.</p>
    <p>Afterward, Mordecai and Esther wrote a letter telling all Jews to
      celebrate the festival of Purim every year to remember how the
      nation was saved.</p>
    <p>The Hebrew text of the book of Esther doesn't mention God, but
      the whole plot shows that God was protecting his people by
      making Esther queen, and as Mordecai put it:</p>
  - <q>
    It could be that you were made queen for a time like this!
    <reference osisRef="thisWork:Esth.4.14@s[It]">(4.14b)
    </reference>
  </q>
  - <div type="outline">
    <title>A QUICK LOOK AT THIS BOOK</title>
    - <lg>
      - <l>
        Esther Becomes Queen

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    <reference osisRef="Esth.1.1-Esth.2.23">(1.1--2.23)
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- <l>
  Haman Plans To Destroy the Jews
  <reference osisRef="Esth.3.1-Esth.3.15">(3.1-15)
  </reference>
  </l>
- <l>
  Mordecai Asks for Esther's Help
  <reference osisRef="Esth.4.1-Esth.4.17">(4.1-17)
  </reference>
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- <l>
  Mordecai Is Honored, Not Killed
  <reference osisRef="Esth.5.1-Esth.6.14">(5.1--6.14)
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- <l>
  Haman Is Put To Death
  <reference osisRef="Esth.7.1-Esth.7.10">(7.1-10)
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- <l>
  The Jews Defend Themselves and Kill Their Enemies
  <reference osisRef="Esth.8.1-Esth.9.19">(8.1--9.19)
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- <l>
  The Festival of Purim
  <reference osisRef="Esth.9.20-Esth.9.32">(9.20-32)
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- <l>
  The Greatness of Xerxes and Mordecai
  <reference osisRef="Esth.10.1-Esth.10.3">(10.1-3)
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<chapter sID="Esth.1" osisID="Esth.1" n="1" />
- <div type="section" scope="Esth.1.1-Esth.1.22">
  <title>Queen Vashti Disobeys King Xerxes</title>
- <p>
  <verse sID="Esth.1.1-Esth.1.2" osisID="Esth.1.1 Esth.1.2" n="1-2" />
  - <note type="crossReference" osisRef="Esth.1.1-Esth.1.2"
    osisID="Esth.1.1!crossReference">
    <reference osisRef="Ezra.4.6">Ezra 4.6.</reference>
  </note>
  King Xerxes
  - <note type="translation" osisRef="Esth.1.1-Esth.1.2"

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osisID="Esth.1.1!note.a">
 <catchWord>Xerxes</catchWord>
 The Hebrew text has
 <q level="1">Ahasuerus,</q>
 who was better known as King Xerxes I (485-465 B.C.).
 </note>
 of Persia lived in his capital city of Susa

- <note type="translation" osisRef="Esth.1.1-Esth.1.2"
 osisID="Esth.1.1!note.b">
 <catchWord>in his capital city of Susa</catchWord>
 Or
 <q level="1">in his royal fortress in the city of Susa.</q>
 Susa was a city east of Babylon and a winter home for
 Persian kings.
 </note>
 and ruled one hundred twenty-seven provinces from India to
 Ethiopia.

- <note type="translation" osisRef="Esth.1.1-Esth.1.2"
 osisID="Esth.1.1!note.c">
 <catchWord>Ethiopia</catchWord>
 The Hebrew text has
 <q level="1">Cush,</q>
 which was a region south of Egypt that included parts of the
 present countries of Ethiopia and Sudan.
 </note>
 <verse eID="Esth.1.1-Esth.1.2" />
 <verse sID="Esth.1.3" osisID="Esth.1.3" />
 During the third year of his rule, Xerxes gave a big dinner for all
 his officials and officers. The governors and leaders of the
 provinces were also invited, and even the commanders of the
 Persian and Median armies came.
 <verse eID="Esth.1.3" />
 <verse sID="Esth.1.4" osisID="Esth.1.4" />
 For one hundred eighty days he showed off his wealth and spent
 a lot of money to impress his guests with the greatness of his
 kingdom.
 <verse eID="Esth.1.4" />
 </p>

- <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.1.5" osisID="Esth.1.5" />
 King Xerxes soon gave another dinner and invited everyone in
 the city of Susa, no matter who they were. The eating and
 drinking lasted seven days in the beautiful palace gardens.
 <verse eID="Esth.1.5" />
 <verse sID="Esth.1.6" osisID="Esth.1.6" />
 The area was decorated with blue and white cotton curtains tied
 back with purple linen cords that ran through silver rings
 fastened to marble columns. Couches of gold and silver rested on
 pavement that had all kinds of designs made from costly bright-
 colored stones and marble and mother-of-pearl.
 <verse eID="Esth.1.6" />
 </p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.1.7" osisID="Esth.1.7" />

The guests drank from gold cups, and each cup had a different design. The king was generous

<verse eID="Esth.1.7" />

<verse sID="Esth.1.8" osisID="Esth.1.8" />

and said to them, "Drink all you want!" Then he told his servants, "Keep their cups full."

<verse eID="Esth.1.8" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.1.9" osisID="Esth.1.9" />

While the men were enjoying themselves, Queen Vashti gave the women a big dinner inside the royal palace.

<verse eID="Esth.1.9" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.1.10" osisID="Esth.1.10" />

By the seventh day, King Xerxes was feeling happy because of so much wine. And he asked his seven personal servants, Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carkas,

<verse eID="Esth.1.10" />

<verse sID="Esth.1.11" osisID="Esth.1.11" />

to bring Queen Vashti to him. The king wanted her to wear her crown and let his people and his officials see how beautiful she was.

<verse eID="Esth.1.11" />

<verse sID="Esth.1.12" osisID="Esth.1.12" />

The king's servants told Queen Vashti what he had said, but she refused to go to him, and this made him terribly angry.

<verse eID="Esth.1.12" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.1.13-Esth.1.14" osisID="Esth.1.13 Esth.1.14" n="13-14" />

The king called in the seven highest officials of Persia and Media. They were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan. These men were very wise and understood all the laws and customs of the country, and the king always asked them what they thought about such matters.

<verse eID="Esth.1.13-Esth.1.14" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.1.15" osisID="Esth.1.15" />

The king said to them, "Queen Vashti refused to come to me when I sent my servants for her. What does the law say I should do about that?"

<verse eID="Esth.1.15" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.1.16" osisID="Esth.1.16" />

Then Memucan told the king and the officials:

<verse eID="Esth.1.16" />

- <q type="block">

<p>Your Majesty, Queen Vashti has not only embarrassed you, but she has insulted your officials and everyone else in all the provinces.</p>

</q>

- <q type="block">

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.1.17" osisID="Esth.1.17" />

The women in the kingdom will hear about this, and they will refuse to respect their husbands. They will say, "If Queen Vashti doesn't obey her husband, why should we?"

<verse eID="Esth.1.17" />

<verse sID="Esth.1.18" osisID="Esth.1.18" />

Before this day is over, the wives of the officials of Persia and Media will find out what Queen Vashti has done, and they will refuse to obey their husbands. They won't respect their husbands, and their husbands will be angry with them.

<verse eID="Esth.1.18" />

</p>

</q>

- <q type="block">

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.1.19" osisID="Esth.1.19" />

Your Majesty, if you agree, you should write for the Medes and Persians a law that can never be changed. This law would keep Queen Vashti from ever seeing you again. Then you could let someone who respects you be queen in her place.

<verse eID="Esth.1.19" />

</p>

</q>

- <q type="block">

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.1.20" osisID="Esth.1.20" />

When the women in your great kingdom hear about this new law, they will respect their husbands, no matter if they are rich or poor.

<verse eID="Esth.1.20" />

</p>

</q>

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.1.21" osisID="Esth.1.21" />

King Xerxes and his officials liked what Memucan had said,

<verse eID="Esth.1.21" />

<verse sID="Esth.1.22" osisID="Esth.1.22" />

and he sent letters to all of his provinces. Each letter was written in the language of the province to which it was sent, and it said that husbands should have complete control over their wives and children.

<verse eID="Esth.1.22" />

</p>

</div>

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<chapter eID="Esth.1" />
<chapter sID="Esth.2" osisID="Esth.2" n="2" />
- <div type="section" scope="Esth.2.1-Esth.2.18">
  <title>Esther Becomes Queen</title>
  - <p>
    <verse sID="Esth.2.1" osisID="Esth.2.1" />
    After a while, King Xerxes got over being angry. But he kept thinking about what Vashti had done and the law that he had written because of her.
    <verse eID="Esth.2.1" />
    <verse sID="Esth.2.2" osisID="Esth.2.2" />
    Then the king's personal servants said:
    <verse eID="Esth.2.2" />
  - <q type="block">
    - <p>
      Your Majesty, a search must be made to find you some beautiful young women.
      <verse sID="Esth.2.3" osisID="Esth.2.3" />
      You can select officers in every province to bring them to the place where you keep your wives in the capital city of Susa. Put your servant Hegai in charge of them since that is his job. He can see to it that they are given the proper beauty treatments.
      <verse eID="Esth.2.3" />
      <verse sID="Esth.2.4" osisID="Esth.2.4" />
      Then let the young woman who pleases you most take Vashti's place as queen.
    </p>
  </q>
  </p>
- <p>
  King Xerxes liked these suggestions, and he followed them.
  <verse eID="Esth.2.4" />
  </p>
- <p>
  <verse sID="Esth.2.5" osisID="Esth.2.5" />
  At this time a Jew named Mordecai was living in Susa. His father was Jair, and his grandfather Shimei was the son of Kish from the tribe of Benjamin.
  <verse eID="Esth.2.5" />
  <verse sID="Esth.2.6" osisID="Esth.2.6" />
  - <note type="crossReference" osisRef="Esth.2.6" osisID="Esth.2.6! crossReference">
    <reference osisRef="2Kgs.24.10">2K 24.10</reference>
  </note>
  Kish
  - <note type="alternative" osisRef="Esth.2.6" osisID="Esth.2.6! note">
    <catchWord>Kish</catchWord>
    <rdg>Mordecai.</rdg>
    The Hebrew text has
    <q level="1">He.</q>
  </note>

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was one of the people that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem, when he took King Jeconiah of Judah to Babylonia.

<verse eID="Esth.2.6" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.2.7" osisID="Esth.2.7" />

Mordecai had a very beautiful cousin named Esther, whose Hebrew name was Hadassah. He had raised her as his own daughter, after her father and mother died.

<verse eID="Esth.2.7" />

<verse sID="Esth.2.8" osisID="Esth.2.8" />

When the king ordered the search for beautiful women, many were taken to the king's palace in Susa, and Esther was one of them.

</p>

- <p>

Hegai was put in charge of all the women,

<verse eID="Esth.2.8" />

<verse sID="Esth.2.9" osisID="Esth.2.9" />

and from the first day, Esther was his favorite. He began her beauty treatments at once. He also gave her plenty of food and seven special maids from the king's palace, and they had the best rooms.

<verse eID="Esth.2.9" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.2.10" osisID="Esth.2.10" />

Mordecai had warned Esther not to tell anyone that she was a Jew, and she obeyed him.

<verse eID="Esth.2.10" />

<verse sID="Esth.2.11" osisID="Esth.2.11" />

He was anxious to see how Esther was getting along and to learn what had happened to her. So each day he would walk back and forth in front of the court where the women lived.

<verse eID="Esth.2.11" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.2.12" osisID="Esth.2.12" />

The young women were given beauty treatments for one whole year. The first six months their skin was rubbed with olive oil and myrrh, and the last six months it was treated with perfumes and cosmetics. Then each of them spent the night alone with King Xerxes.

<verse eID="Esth.2.12" />

<verse sID="Esth.2.13" osisID="Esth.2.13" />

When a young woman went to the king, she could wear whatever clothes or jewelry she chose from the women's living quarters.

<verse eID="Esth.2.13" />

<verse sID="Esth.2.14" osisID="Esth.2.14" />

In the evening she would go to the king, and the following morning she would go to the place where his wives stayed after being with him. There a man named Shaashgaz was in charge of the king's wives.

- <note type="translation" osisRef="Esth.2.14" osisID="Esth.2.14!note">
 <catchWord>wives</catchWord>
 This translates a Hebrew word for women who were legally bound to a man, but without the full privileges of a wife.
 </note>
 Only the ones the king wanted and asked for by name could go back to the king.
 <verse eID="Esth.2.14" />
 </p>
- <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.2.15-Esth.2.16" osisID="Esth.2.15 Esth.2.16" n="15-16" />
 Xerxes had been king for seven years when Esther's turn came to go to him during Tebeth,
 - <note type="explanation" osisRef="Esth.2.15-Esth.2.16" osisID="Esth.2.15!note">
 <catchWord>Tebeth</catchWord>
 The tenth month of the Hebrew calendar, from about mid-December to mid-January.
 </note>
 the tenth month of the year. Everyone liked Esther. The king's personal servant Hegai was in charge of the women, and Esther trusted Hegai and asked him what she ought to take with her.
 - <note type="translation" osisRef="Esth.2.15-Esth.2.16" osisID="Esth.2.15!note">
 <catchWord>her</catchWord>
 The Hebrew text adds,
 <q level="1">Esther was the daughter of Abihail and was the cousin of Mordecai, who had adopted her after her parents died</q>
 <reference osisRef="Esth.2.7">(see verse 7).</reference>
 </note>
 <verse eID="Esth.2.15-Esth.2.16" />
 </p>
- <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.2.17" osisID="Esth.2.17" />
 Xerxes liked Esther more than he did any of the other young women. None of them pleased him as much as she did, and right away he fell in love with her and crowned her queen in place of Vashti.
 <verse eID="Esth.2.17" />
 <verse sID="Esth.2.18" osisID="Esth.2.18" />
 In honor of Esther he gave a big dinner for his leaders and officials. Then he declared a holiday everywhere in his kingdom and gave expensive gifts.
 <verse eID="Esth.2.18" />
 </p>
- </div>
- <div type="section" scope="Esth.2.19-Esth.2.23">
 <title>Mordecai Saves the King's Life</title>
 - <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.2.19" osisID="Esth.2.19" />
 </p>
 </div>

When the young women were brought together again, Esther's cousin Mordecai had become a palace official.

<verse eID="Esth.2.19" />

<verse sID="Esth.2.20" osisID="Esth.2.20" />

He had told Esther never to tell anyone that she was a Jew, and she obeyed him, just as she had always done.

<verse eID="Esth.2.20" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.2.21" osisID="Esth.2.21" />

Bigthana and Teresh were the two men who guarded King Xerxes' rooms, but they got angry with the king and decided to kill him.

<verse eID="Esth.2.21" />

<verse sID="Esth.2.22" osisID="Esth.2.22" />

Mordecai found out about their plans and asked Queen Esther to tell the king what he had found out.

<verse eID="Esth.2.22" />

<verse sID="Esth.2.23" osisID="Esth.2.23" />

King Xerxes learned that Mordecai's report was true, and he had the two men hanged. Then the king had all of this written down in his record book as he watched.

<verse eID="Esth.2.23" />

</p>

</div>

<chapter eID="Esth.2" />

<chapter sID="Esth.3" osisID="Esth.3" n="3" />

- <div type="section" scope="Esth.3.1-Esth.3.15">

<title>Haman Plans To Destroy the Jews</title>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.3.1" osisID="Esth.3.1" />

Later, King Xerxes promoted Haman the son of Hammedatha to the highest position in his kingdom. Haman was a descendant of Agag,

- <note type="explanation" osisRef="Esth.3.1" osisID="Esth.3.1! note">

<catchWord>Agag</catchWord>

Agag was a king who had fought against the Jews long before the time of Esther

<reference osisRef="1Sam.15.1-1Sam.15.33">(see 1Samuel 15.1-33).</reference>

</note>

<verse eID="Esth.3.1" />

<verse sID="Esth.3.2" osisID="Esth.3.2" />

and the king had given orders for his officials at the royal gate to honor Haman by kneeling down to him. All of them obeyed except Mordecai.

<verse eID="Esth.3.2" />

<verse sID="Esth.3.3" osisID="Esth.3.3" />

When the other officials asked Mordecai why he disobeyed the king's command,

<verse eID="Esth.3.3" />

<verse sID="Esth.3.4" osisID="Esth.3.4" />

he said, "Because I am a Jew." They spoke to him for several days about kneeling down, but he still refused to obey. Finally, they reported this to Haman, to find out if he would let Mordecai get away with it.

<verse eID="Esth.3.4" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.3.5" osisID="Esth.3.5" />

Haman was furious to learn that Mordecai refused to kneel down and honor him.

<verse eID="Esth.3.5" />

<verse sID="Esth.3.6" osisID="Esth.3.6" />

And when he found out that Mordecai was a Jew, he knew that killing only Mordecai was not enough. Every Jew in the whole kingdom had to be killed.

<verse eID="Esth.3.6" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.3.7" osisID="Esth.3.7" />

It was now the twelfth year of the rule of King Xerxes. During Nisan,

- <note type="explanation" osisRef="Esth.3.7" osisID="Esth.3.7! note.a">

<catchWord>Nisan</catchWord>

The first month of the Hebrew calendar, from about mid-March to mid-April.

</note>

the first month of the year, Haman said, "Find out the best time for me to do this."

- <note type="translation" osisRef="Esth.3.7" osisID="Esth.3.7! note.b">

<catchWord>Find out ... do this</catchWord>

The Hebrew text has

<q level="1">cast lots,</q>

which were pieces of wood or stone used to find out how and when to do something. For

<q level="1">lots</q>

the Hebrew text uses the Babylonian word

<q level="1">purim.</q>

</note>

The time chosen was Adar,

- <note type="explanation" osisRef="Esth.3.7" osisID="Esth.3.7! note.c">

<catchWord>Adar</catchWord>

The twelfth month of the Hebrew calendar, from about mid-February to mid-March.

</note>

the twelfth month.

<verse eID="Esth.3.7" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.3.8" osisID="Esth.3.8" />

- <note type="crossReference" osisRef="Esth.3.8" osisID="Esth.3.8!"

crossReference">

<reference osisRef="Wis.2.14">Ws 2.14</reference>

</note>

Then Haman went to the king and said:

<verse eID="Esth.3.8" />

- <q type="block">

- <p>

Your Majesty, there are some people who live all over your kingdom and won't have a thing to do with anyone else. They have customs that are different from everyone else's, and they refuse to obey your laws. We would be better off to get rid of them!

<verse sID="Esth.3.9" osisID="Esth.3.9" />

Why not give orders for all of them to be killed? I can promise that you will get tons of silver for your treasury.

<verse eID="Esth.3.9" />

</p>

</q>

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.3.10" osisID="Esth.3.10" />

The king handed his official ring to Haman, who hated the Jews, and the king told him,

<verse eID="Esth.3.10" />

<verse sID="Esth.3.11" osisID="Esth.3.11" />

"Do what you want with those people! You can keep their money."

<verse eID="Esth.3.11" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.3.12" osisID="Esth.3.12" />

On the thirteenth day of Nisan, Haman called in the king's secretaries and ordered them to write letters in every language used in the kingdom. The letters were written in the name of the king and sealed by using the king's own ring.

- <note type="explanation" osisRef="Esth.3.12" osisID="Esth.3.12! note">

<catchWord>king's own ring</catchWord>

Melted wax was used to seal a letter, and while the wax was still soft, the king's ring was pressed in the wax to show that the letter was official.

</note>

At once they were sent to the king's highest officials, the governors of each province, and the leaders of the different nations in the kingdom of Xerxes.

<verse eID="Esth.3.12" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.3.13" osisID="Esth.3.13" />

The letters were taken by messengers to every part of the kingdom, and this is what was said in the letters:

<verse eID="Esth.3.13" />

- <q type="block">

<p>On the thirteenth day of Adar, the twelfth month, all Jewish men, women, and children are to be killed. And their property is to be taken.</p>

</q>

</p>

- <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.3.14-Esth.3.15" osisID="Esth.3.14 Esth.3.15" n="14-15" />
 King Xerxes gave orders for these letters to be posted where they could be seen by everyone all over the kingdom. The king's command was obeyed, and one of the letters was read aloud to the people in the walled city of Susa. Then the king and Haman sat down to drink together, but no one in the city

- <note type="alternative" osisRef="Esth.3.14-Esth.3.15" osisID="Esth.3.14!note">
 <catchWord>walled city ... city</catchWord>
 <rdg>royal fortress ... rest of the city.</rdg>

</note>
 could figure out what was going on.

<verse eID="Esth.3.14-Esth.3.15" />

</p>

</div>

<chapter eID="Esth.3" />

<chapter sID="Esth.4" osisID="Esth.4" n="4" />

- <div type="section" scope="Esth.4.1-Esth.4.17">
 <title>Mordecai Asks for Esther's Help</title>

- <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.4.1" osisID="Esth.4.1" />
 When Mordecai heard about the letter, he tore his clothes in sorrow and put on sackcloth. Then he covered his head with ashes and went through the city, crying and weeping.

<verse eID="Esth.4.1" />

<verse sID="Esth.4.2" osisID="Esth.4.2" />
 But he could go only as far as the palace gate, because no one wearing sackcloth was allowed inside the palace.

<verse eID="Esth.4.2" />

<verse sID="Esth.4.3" osisID="Esth.4.3" />
 In every province where the king's orders were read, the Jews cried and mourned, and they went without eating.

- <note type="explanation" osisRef="Esth.4.3" osisID="Esth.4.3!note">
 <catchWord>went without eating</catchWord>
 The Israelites would sometimes go without eating (also called

<q level="1">fasting</q>
) in times of great sorrow or danger.

</note>
 Many of them even put on sackcloth and sat in ashes.

<verse eID="Esth.4.3" />

</p>

- <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.4.4" osisID="Esth.4.4" />
 When Esther's servant girls and her other servants told her what

Mordecai was doing, she became very upset and sent Mordecai some clothes to wear in place of the sackcloth. But he refused to take them.

<verse eID="Esth.4.4" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.4.5" osisID="Esth.4.5" />

Esther had a servant named Hathach, who had been given to her by the king. So she called him in and said, "Find out what's wrong with Mordecai and why he's acting this way."

<verse eID="Esth.4.5" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.4.6" osisID="Esth.4.6" />

Hathach went to Mordecai in the city square in front of the palace gate,

<verse eID="Esth.4.6" />

<verse sID="Esth.4.7" osisID="Esth.4.7" />

and Mordecai told him everything that had happened. He also told him how much money Haman had promised to add to the king's treasury, if all the Jews were killed.

<verse eID="Esth.4.7" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.4.8" osisID="Esth.4.8" />

Mordecai gave Hathach a copy of the orders for the murder of the Jews and told him that these had been read in Susa. He said, "Show this to Esther and explain what it means. Ask her to go to the king and beg him to have pity on her people, the Jews!"

<verse eID="Esth.4.8" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.4.9" osisID="Esth.4.9" />

Hathach went back to Esther and told her what Mordecai had said.

<verse eID="Esth.4.9" />

<verse sID="Esth.4.10" osisID="Esth.4.10" />

She answered, "Tell Mordecai

<verse eID="Esth.4.10" />

<verse sID="Esth.4.11" osisID="Esth.4.11" />

there is a law about going in to see the king, and all his officials and his people know about this law. Anyone who goes in to see the king without being invited by him will be put to death. The only way that anyone can be saved is for the king to hold out the gold scepter to that person. And it's been thirty days since he has asked for me."

<verse eID="Esth.4.11" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.4.12" osisID="Esth.4.12" />

When Mordecai was told what Esther had said,

<verse eID="Esth.4.12" />

<verse sID="Esth.4.13" osisID="Esth.4.13" />

he sent back this reply, "Don't think that you will escape being killed with the rest of the Jews, just because you live in the king's palace.

<verse eID="Esth.4.13" />

<verse sID="Esth.4.14" osisID="Esth.4.14" />

If you don't speak up now, we will somehow get help, but you and your family will be killed. It could be that you were made queen for a time like this!"

<verse eID="Esth.4.14" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.4.15" osisID="Esth.4.15" />

Esther sent a message to Mordecai, saying,

<verse eID="Esth.4.15" />

<verse sID="Esth.4.16" osisID="Esth.4.16" />

"Bring together all the Jews in Susa and tell them to go without eating for my sake! Don't eat or drink for three days and nights. My servant girls and I will do the same. Then I will go in to see the king, even if it means I must die."

<verse eID="Esth.4.16" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.4.17" osisID="Esth.4.17" />

Mordecai did everything Esther told him to do.

<verse eID="Esth.4.17" />

</p>

</div>

<chapter eID="Esth.4" />

<chapter sID="Esth.5" osisID="Esth.5" n="5" />

- <div type="section" scope="Esth.5.1-Esth.5.8">

<title>Esther Invites the King and Haman to a Dinner</title>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.5.1" osisID="Esth.5.1" />

Three days later, Esther dressed in her royal robes and went to the inner court of the palace in front of the throne. The king was sitting there, facing the open doorway.

<verse eID="Esth.5.1" />

<verse sID="Esth.5.2" osisID="Esth.5.2" />

He was happy to see Esther, and he held out the gold scepter to her.

</p>

- <p>

When Esther came up and touched the tip of the scepter,

<verse eID="Esth.5.2" />

<verse sID="Esth.5.3" osisID="Esth.5.3" />

the king said, "Esther, what brings you here? Just ask, and I will give you as much as half of my kingdom."

<verse eID="Esth.5.3" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.5.4" osisID="Esth.5.4" />

Esther answered, "Your Majesty, please come with Haman to a dinner I will prepare for you later today."

- <verse eID="Esth.5.4" />
</p>
- <p>
<verse sID="Esth.5.5" osisID="Esth.5.5" />
The king said to his servants, "Hurry and get Haman, so we can accept Esther's invitation."
</p>
 - <p>
The king and Haman went to Esther's dinner,
<verse eID="Esth.5.5" />
<verse sID="Esth.5.6" osisID="Esth.5.6" />
and while they were drinking wine, the king asked her, "What can I do for you? Just ask, and I will give you as much as half of my kingdom."
<verse eID="Esth.5.6" />
</p>
 - <p>
<verse sID="Esth.5.7-Esth.5.8" osisID="Esth.5.7 Esth.5.8" n="7-8" />
Esther replied, "Your Majesty, if you really care for me and are willing to do what I want, please come again tomorrow with Haman to the dinner I will prepare for you. At that time I will answer Your Majesty's question."
<verse eID="Esth.5.7-Esth.5.8" />
</p>
- </div>
- <div type="section" scope="Esth.5.9-Esth.5.14">
<title>Haman Plans To Kill Mordecai</title>
 - <p>
<verse sID="Esth.5.9" osisID="Esth.5.9" />
Haman was feeling great as he left. But when he saw Mordecai at the palace gate, he noticed that Mordecai did not stand up or show him any respect. This made Haman really angry,
<verse eID="Esth.5.9" />
<verse sID="Esth.5.10" osisID="Esth.5.10" />
but he did not say a thing.
</p>
 - <p>
When Haman got home, he called together his friends and his wife Zeresh
<verse eID="Esth.5.10" />
<verse sID="Esth.5.11" osisID="Esth.5.11" />
and started bragging about his great wealth and all his sons. He told them the many ways that the king had honored him and how all the other officials and leaders had to respect him.
<verse eID="Esth.5.11" />
<verse sID="Esth.5.12" osisID="Esth.5.12" />
Haman added, "That's not all! Besides the king himself, I'm the only person Queen Esther invited for dinner. She has also invited the king and me to dinner tomorrow.
<verse eID="Esth.5.12" />
<verse sID="Esth.5.13" osisID="Esth.5.13" />
But none of this makes me happy, as long as I see that Jew

Mordecai sitting at the palace gate."
 <verse eID="Esth.5.13" />
 </p>
 - <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.5.14" osisID="Esth.5.14" />
Haman's wife and friends said to him, "Have a tower built about seventy-five feet high, and tomorrow morning ask the king to hang Mordecai there. Then later, you can have dinner with the king and enjoy yourself."
 </p>
 - <p>
This seemed like a good idea to Haman, and he had the tower built.
 <verse eID="Esth.5.14" />
 </p>
 </div>
 <chapter eID="Esth.5" />
 <chapter sID="Esth.6" osisID="Esth.6" n="6" />
 - <div type="section" scope="Esth.6.1-Esth.6.14">
 <title>The King Honors Mordecai</title>
 - <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.6.1" osisID="Esth.6.1" />
That night the king could not sleep, and he had a servant read him the records of what had happened since he had been king.
 <verse eID="Esth.6.1" />
 <verse sID="Esth.6.2" osisID="Esth.6.2" />
 - <note type="crossReference" osisRef="Esth.6.2" osisID="Esth.6.2!" crossReference">
 <reference osisRef="Esth.2.21">Es 2.21</reference>
 </note>
When the servant read how Mordecai had kept Bigthana and Teresh from killing the king,
 <verse eID="Esth.6.2" />
 <verse sID="Esth.6.3" osisID="Esth.6.3" />
the king asked, "What has been done to reward Mordecai for this?"
 </p>
 - <p>
"Nothing, Your Majesty!" the king's servants replied.
 <verse eID="Esth.6.3" />
 </p>
 - <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.6.4" osisID="Esth.6.4" />
About this time, Haman came in to ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on the tower he had built. The king saw him and asked, "Who is that man waiting in front of the throne room?"
 <verse eID="Esth.6.4" />
 </p>
 - <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.6.5" osisID="Esth.6.5" />
The king's servants answered, "Your Majesty, it is Haman."
 </p>
 - <p>

"Have him come in," the king commanded.

<verse eID="Esth.6.5" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.6.6" osisID="Esth.6.6" />

When Haman entered the room, the king asked him, "What should I do for a man I want to honor?"

</p>

- <p>

Haman was sure that he was the one the king wanted to honor.

<verse eID="Esth.6.6" />

<verse sID="Esth.6.7" osisID="Esth.6.7" />

So he replied, "Your Majesty, if you wish to honor a man,

<verse eID="Esth.6.7" />

<verse sID="Esth.6.8" osisID="Esth.6.8" />

have someone bring him one of your own robes and one of your own horses with a fancy headdress.

<verse eID="Esth.6.8" />

<verse sID="Esth.6.9" osisID="Esth.6.9" />

Have one of your highest officials place your robe on this man and lead him through the streets on your horse, while someone shouts, 'This is how the king honors a man!' "

<verse eID="Esth.6.9" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.6.10" osisID="Esth.6.10" />

The king replied, "Hurry and do just what you have said! Don't forget a thing. Get the robe and the horse for Mordecai the Jew, who is on duty at the palace gate!"

<verse eID="Esth.6.10" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.6.11" osisID="Esth.6.11" />

Haman got the king's robe and put it on Mordecai. He led him through the city on the horse and shouted as he went, "This is how the king honors a man!"

<verse eID="Esth.6.11" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.6.12" osisID="Esth.6.12" />

Afterwards, Mordecai returned to his duties at the palace gate, and Haman hurried home, hiding his face in shame.

<verse eID="Esth.6.12" />

<verse sID="Esth.6.13" osisID="Esth.6.13" />

Haman told his wife and friends what had happened. Then his wife and his advisors said, "If Mordecai is a Jew, this is just the beginning of your troubles! You will end up a ruined man."

<verse eID="Esth.6.13" />

<verse sID="Esth.6.14" osisID="Esth.6.14" />

They were still talking, when the king's servants came and quickly took Haman to the dinner that Esther had prepared.

<verse eID="Esth.6.14" />

</p>

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</div>
<chapter eID="Esth.6" />
<chapter sID="Esth.7" osisID="Esth.7" n="7" />
- <div type="section" scope="Esth.7.1-Esth.7.10">
  <title>Haman Is Punished</title>
  - <p>
    <verse sID="Esth.7.1" osisID="Esth.7.1" />
    The king and Haman were dining with Esther
    <verse eID="Esth.7.1" />
    <verse sID="Esth.7.2" osisID="Esth.7.2" />
    and drinking wine during the second dinner, when the king again
    said, "Esther, what can I do for you? Just ask, and I will give you
    as much as half of my kingdom!"
    <verse eID="Esth.7.2" />
  </p>
  - <p>
    <verse sID="Esth.7.3" osisID="Esth.7.3" />
    Esther answered, "Your Majesty, if you really care for me and are
    willing to help, you can save me and my people. That's what I
    really want,
    <verse eID="Esth.7.3" />
    <verse sID="Esth.7.4" osisID="Esth.7.4" />
    because a reward has been promised to anyone who kills my
    people. Your Majesty, if we were merely going to be sold as
    slaves, I would not have bothered you."
  - <note type="translation" osisRef="Esth.7.4" osisID="Esth.7.4!
    note">
    <catchWord>I would ... bothered you</catchWord>
    One possible meaning for the difficult Hebrew text.
  </note>
    <verse eID="Esth.7.4" />
  </p>
  - <p>
    <verse sID="Esth.7.5" osisID="Esth.7.5" />
    "Who would dare to do such a thing?" the king asked.
    <verse eID="Esth.7.5" />
  </p>
  - <p>
    <verse sID="Esth.7.6" osisID="Esth.7.6" />
    Esther replied, "That evil Haman is the one out to get us!"
  </p>
  - <p>
    Haman was terrified, as he looked at the king and the queen.
    <verse eID="Esth.7.6" />
  </p>
  - <p>
    <verse sID="Esth.7.7" osisID="Esth.7.7" />
    The king was so angry that he got up, left his wine, and went out
    into the palace garden.
  </p>
  - <p>
    Haman realized that the king had already decided what to do
    with him, and he stayed and begged Esther to save his life.
  </p>

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<verse eID="Esth.7.7" />
</p>

- <p>
<verse sID="Esth.7.8" osisID="Esth.7.8" />
Just as the king came back into the room, Haman got down on his knees beside Esther, who was lying on the couch. The king shouted, "Now you're even trying to rape my queen here in my own palace!"
</p>

- <p>
As soon as the king said this, his servants covered Haman's head.
<verse eID="Esth.7.8" />
<verse sID="Esth.7.9" osisID="Esth.7.9" />
Then Harbona, one of the king's personal servants, said, "Your Majesty, Haman built a tower seventy-five feet high beside his house, so he could hang Mordecai on it. And Mordecai is the very one who spoke up and saved your life."
</p>

- <p>
"Hang Haman from his own tower!" the king commanded.
<verse eID="Esth.7.9" />
<verse sID="Esth.7.10" osisID="Esth.7.10" />
Right away, Haman was hanged on the tower he had built to hang Mordecai, and the king calmed down.
<verse eID="Esth.7.10" />
</p>

</div>

<chapter eID="Esth.7" />
<chapter sID="Esth.8" osisID="Esth.8" n="8" />

- <div type="section" scope="Esth.8.1-Esth.8.17">
<title>**A Happy Ending for the Jews**</title>

- <p>
<verse sID="Esth.8.1" osisID="Esth.8.1" />
Before the end of the day, King Xerxes gave Esther everything that had belonged to Haman, the enemy of the Jews. Esther told the king that Mordecai was her cousin. So the king made Mordecai one of his highest officials
<verse eID="Esth.8.1" />
<verse sID="Esth.8.2" osisID="Esth.8.2" />
and gave him the royal ring that Haman had worn. Then Esther put Mordecai in charge of Haman's property.
<verse eID="Esth.8.2" />
</p>

- <p>
<verse sID="Esth.8.3" osisID="Esth.8.3" />
Once again Esther went to speak to the king. This time she fell down at his feet, crying and begging, "Please stop Haman's evil plan to have the Jews killed!"
<verse eID="Esth.8.3" />
<verse sID="Esth.8.4" osisID="Esth.8.4" />
King Xerxes held out the golden scepter to Esther,
<verse eID="Esth.8.4" />

<verse sID="Esth.8.5" osisID="Esth.8.5" />

and she got up and said, "Your Majesty, I know that you will do the right thing and that you really love me. Please stop what Haman has planned. He has already sent letters demanding that the Jews in all your provinces be killed,

<verse eID="Esth.8.5" />

<verse sID="Esth.8.6" osisID="Esth.8.6" />

and I can't bear to see my people and my own relatives destroyed."

<verse eID="Esth.8.6" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.8.7" osisID="Esth.8.7" />

King Xerxes then said to Esther and Mordecai, "I have already ordered Haman to be hanged and his house given to Esther, because of his evil plans to kill the Jews.

<verse eID="Esth.8.7" />

<verse sID="Esth.8.8" osisID="Esth.8.8" />

I now give you permission to make a law that will save the lives of your people. You may use my ring to seal the law, so that it can never be changed."

<verse eID="Esth.8.8" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.8.9" osisID="Esth.8.9" />

On the twenty-third day of Sivan,

- <note type="explanation" osisRef="Esth.8.9" osisID="Esth.8.9! note">

<catchWord>Sivan</catchWord>

The third month of the Hebrew calendar, from about mid-May to mid-June.

</note>

the third month, the king's secretaries wrote the law. They obeyed Mordecai and wrote to the Jews, the rulers, the governors, and the officials of all one hundred twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia.

- <note type="translation" osisRef="Esth.8.9" osisID="Esth.8.9! note">

<catchWord>Ethiopia</catchWord>

See the note at

<reference osisRef="thisWork:Esth.1.1! note.c">1.1,2</reference>

.

</note>

The letters were written in every language used in the kingdom, including the Jewish language.

<verse eID="Esth.8.9" />

<verse sID="Esth.8.10" osisID="Esth.8.10" />

They were written in the name of King Xerxes and sealed with his ring. Then they were taken by messengers who rode the king's finest and fastest horses.

<verse eID="Esth.8.10" />

</p>

- <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.8.11-Esth.8.13" osisID="Esth.8.11 Esth.8.12 Esth.8.13" n="11-13" />
In these letters the king said:
- <q type="block">
 - <p>
On the thirteenth day of Adar,
 - <note type="explanation" osisRef="Esth.8.11-Esth.8.13" osisID="Esth.8.11!note">
 <catchWord>Adar</catchWord>
See the note at
 <reference osisRef="thisWork:Esth.3.7!note.c">3.7</reference>
 .
 </note>
the twelfth month, the Jews in every city and province will be allowed to get together and defend themselves. They may destroy any army that attacks them, and they may kill all of their enemies, including women and children. They may also take everything that belongs to their enemies.
 </p>
 </q>
 </p>
- <p>
A copy of this law is to be posted in every province and read by everyone.
 <verse eID="Esth.8.11-Esth.8.13" />
 </p>
- <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.8.14-Esth.8.15" osisID="Esth.8.14 Esth.8.15" n="14-15" />
Then the king ordered his messengers to take their fastest horses and deliver the law as quickly as possible to every province. When Mordecai left, he was wearing clothes fit for a king. He wore blue and white robes, a large gold crown, and a cape made of fine linen and purple cloth.
 </p>
- <p>
After the law was announced in Susa, everyone shouted and cheered,
 <verse eID="Esth.8.14-Esth.8.15" />
 <verse sID="Esth.8.16" osisID="Esth.8.16" />
and the Jews were no longer afraid. In fact, they were very happy and felt that they had won a victory.
 <verse eID="Esth.8.16" />
 </p>
- <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.8.17" osisID="Esth.8.17" />
In every province and city where the law was sent, the Jews had parties and celebrated. Many of the people in the provinces accepted the Jewish religion, because they were now afraid of the Jews.

<verse eID="Esth.8.17" />
 </p>
 </div>
 <chapter eID="Esth.8" />
 <chapter sID="Esth.9" osisID="Esth.9" n="9" />
 - <div type="section" scope="Esth.9.1-Esth.9.19">
 <title>The Jews Destroy Their Enemies</title>
 - <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.9.1" osisID="Esth.9.1" />
 The first law that the king had made was to be followed on the thirteenth day of Adar,
 - <note type="explanation" osisRef="Esth.9.1" osisID="Esth.9.1!note">
 <catchWord>Adar</catchWord>
 See the note at
 <reference osisRef="thisWork:Esth.3.7!note.c">3.7</reference>
 .
 </note>
 the twelfth month. This was the very day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to do away with them. But the Jews turned things around,
 <verse eID="Esth.9.1" />
 <verse sID="Esth.9.2" osisID="Esth.9.2" />
 and in the cities of every province they came together to attack their enemies. Everyone was afraid of the Jews, and no one could do anything to oppose them.
 <verse eID="Esth.9.2" />
 </p>
 - <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.9.3" osisID="Esth.9.3" />
 The leaders of the provinces, the rulers, the governors, and the court officials were afraid of Mordecai and took sides with the Jews.
 <verse eID="Esth.9.3" />
 <verse sID="Esth.9.4" osisID="Esth.9.4" />
 Everyone in the provinces knew that the king had promoted him and had given him a lot of power.
 <verse eID="Esth.9.4" />
 </p>
 - <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.9.5" osisID="Esth.9.5" />
 The Jews took their swords and did away with their enemies, without showing any mercy.
 <verse eID="Esth.9.5" />
 <verse sID="Esth.9.6-Esth.9.10" osisID="Esth.9.6 Esth.9.7 Esth.9.8 Esth.9.9 Esth.9.10" n="6-10" />
 They killed five hundred people in Susa,
 - <note type="alternative" osisRef="Esth.9.6-Esth.9.10" osisID="Esth.9.6!note">
 <catchWord>in Susa</catchWord>
 <rdg>in the royal fortress in Susa.</rdg>
 </note>
 but they did not take anything that belonged to the ones they

killed. Haman had been one of the worst enemies of the Jews, and ten of his sons were among those who were killed. Their names were Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha.

<verse eID="Esth.9.6-Esth.9.10" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.9.11" osisID="Esth.9.11" />

Later that day, someone told the king how many people had been killed in Susa.

- <note type="alternative" osisRef="Esth.9.11" osisID="Esth.9.11! note">

<catchWord>in Susa</catchWord>

<rdg>in the royal fortress in Susa.</rdg>

</note>

<verse eID="Esth.9.11" />

<verse sID="Esth.9.12" osisID="Esth.9.12" />

Then he told Esther, "Five hundred people, including Haman's ten sons, have been killed in Susa alone. If that many were killed here, what must have happened in the provinces? Is there anything else you want done? Just tell me, and it will be done."

<verse eID="Esth.9.12" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.9.13" osisID="Esth.9.13" />

Esther answered, "Your Majesty, please let the Jews in Susa fight to defend themselves tomorrow, just as they did today. And order the bodies of Haman's ten sons to be hanged in public."

<verse eID="Esth.9.13" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.9.14" osisID="Esth.9.14" />

King Xerxes did what Esther had requested, and the bodies of Haman's sons were hung in Susa.

<verse eID="Esth.9.14" />

<verse sID="Esth.9.15" osisID="Esth.9.15" />

Then on the fourteenth day of Adar the Jews of the city got together and killed three hundred more people. But they still did not take anything that belonged to their enemies.

<verse eID="Esth.9.15" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.9.16-Esth.9.17" osisID="Esth.9.16 Esth.9.17" n="16-17" />

On the thirteenth day of Adar, the Jews in the provinces had come together to defend themselves. They killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies, but the Jews did not take anything that belonged to the ones they killed. Then on the fourteenth day of the month the Jews celebrated with a feast.

<verse eID="Esth.9.16-Esth.9.17" />

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.9.18" osisID="Esth.9.18" />

On the fifteenth day of the month the Jews in Susa held a holiday and celebrated, after killing their enemies on the thirteenth and the fourteenth.

<verse eID="Esth.9.18" />

<verse sID="Esth.9.19" osisID="Esth.9.19" />

This is why the Jews in the villages now celebrate on the fourteenth day of the month. It is a joyful holiday that they celebrate by feasting and sending gifts of food to each other.

<verse eID="Esth.9.19" />

</p>

</div>

- <div type="section" scope="Esth.9.20-Esth.9.23">

<title>The Festival of Purim</title>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.9.20" osisID="Esth.9.20" />

Mordecai wrote down everything that had happened. Then he sent letters to the Jews everywhere in the provinces

<verse eID="Esth.9.20" />

<verse sID="Esth.9.21" osisID="Esth.9.21" />

and told them:

<verse eID="Esth.9.21" />

- <q type="block">

- <p>

Each year you must celebrate on both the fourteenth and the fifteenth of Adar,

<verse sID="Esth.9.22" osisID="Esth.9.22" />

the days when we Jews defeated our enemies. Remember this month as a time when our sorrow was turned to joy, and celebration took the place of crying. Celebrate by having parties and by giving to the poor and by sharing gifts of food with each other.

<verse eID="Esth.9.22" />

</p>

</q>

</p>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.9.23" osisID="Esth.9.23" />

They followed Mordecai's instructions and set aside these two days every year as a time of celebration.

<verse eID="Esth.9.23" />

</p>

</div>

- <div type="section" scope="Esth.9.24-Esth.9.32">

<title>The Reason for the Festival of Purim</title>

- <p>

<verse sID="Esth.9.24" osisID="Esth.9.24" />

- <note type="crossReference" osisRef="Esth.9.24"

osisID="Esth.9.24!crossReference">

<reference osisRef="Esth.3.7">Es 3.7.</reference>

</note>

Haman was the son of Hammedatha and a descendant of Agag.

He hated the Jews so much that he planned to destroy them, but he wanted to find out the best time to do it. So he cast lots.

- <note type="translation" osisRef="Esth.9.24" osisID="Esth.9.24!note">
 <catchWord>cast lots</catchWord>
 See the note at
 <reference osisRef="thisWork:Esth.3.7!note.b">3.7</reference>
 .
 </note>
 <verse eID="Esth.9.24" />
 </p>
- <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.9.25" osisID="Esth.9.25" />
 Esther went to King Xerxes and asked him to save her people. Then the king gave written orders for Haman and his sons to be punished in the same terrible way that Haman had in mind for the Jews. So they were hanged.
 <verse eID="Esth.9.25" />
 <verse sID="Esth.9.26" osisID="Esth.9.26" />
 Mordecai's letter had said that the Jews must celebrate for two days because of what had happened to them. This time of celebration is called Purim,
- <note type="explanation" osisRef="Esth.9.26" osisID="Esth.9.26!note">
 <catchWord>Purim</catchWord>
 The Jewish festival of Purim got its name from
 <q level="1">purim,</q>
 which is the Babylonian name for the lots that Haman used. Purim is celebrated each year on the 14th and 15th of Adar, which is about the first of March.
 </note>
 which is the Hebrew word for the lots that were cast.
 <verse eID="Esth.9.26" />
 <verse sID="Esth.9.27" osisID="Esth.9.27" />
 Now every year the Jews set aside these two days for having parties and celebrating, just as they were told to do.
 <verse eID="Esth.9.27" />
 <verse sID="Esth.9.28" osisID="Esth.9.28" />
 From now on, all Jewish families must remember to celebrate Purim on these two days each year.
 <verse eID="Esth.9.28" />
 </p>
- <p>
 <verse sID="Esth.9.29" osisID="Esth.9.29" />
 Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, wanted to give full authority to Mordecai's letter about the Festival of Purim, and with his help she wrote a letter about the feast.
 <verse eID="Esth.9.29" />
 <verse sID="Esth.9.30" osisID="Esth.9.30" />
 Copies of this letter were sent to Jews in the one hundred twenty-seven provinces of King Xerxes. In the letter they said:
 <verse eID="Esth.9.30" />
- <q type="block">
 <p>We pray that all of you will live in peace and safety.</p>
 </q>

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- <q type="block">
- <p>
  <verse sID="Esth.9.31" osisID="Esth.9.31" />
  You and your descendants must always remember to
  celebrate Purim at the time and in the way that we have
  said. You must also follow the instructions that we have
  given you about mourning and going without eating.
- <note type="explanation" osisRef="Esth.9.31"
  osisID="Esth.9.31!note">
  <catchWord>going without eating</catchWord>
  See the note at
  <reference osisRef="thisWork:Esth.4.3!
  note">4.3</reference>
  .
  </note>
  <verse eID="Esth.9.31" />
</p>
</q>
- <q type="block">
- <p>
  <verse sID="Esth.9.32" osisID="Esth.9.32" />
  These laws about Purim are written by the authority of
  Queen Esther.
  <verse eID="Esth.9.32" />
</p>
</q>
</p>
</div>
<chapter eID="Esth.9" />
<chapter sID="Esth.10" osisID="Esth.10" n="10" />
- <div type="section" scope="Esth.10.1-Esth.10.3">
  <title>The Greatness of Xerxes and Mordecai</title>
- <p>
  <verse sID="Esth.10.1" osisID="Esth.10.1" />
  King Xerxes made everyone in his kingdom pay taxes, even those
  in lands across the sea.
  <verse eID="Esth.10.1" />
  <verse sID="Esth.10.2" osisID="Esth.10.2" />
  All the great and famous things that King Xerxes did are written
  in the record books of the kings of Media and Persia. These
  records also tell about the honors that the king gave to Mordecai.
  <verse eID="Esth.10.2" />
  <verse sID="Esth.10.3" osisID="Esth.10.3" />
  Next to the king himself, Mordecai was the highest official in the
  kingdom. He was a popular leader of the Jews, because he
  helped them in many ways and would even speak to the king for
  them.
  <verse eID="Esth.10.3" />
</p>
</div>
<chapter eID="Esth.10" />
</div>
</osisText>

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</osis>