

## THE BOOK OF ESTHER

[In the second year of reign of Artaxerxes the great king, on the first *day* of Nisan, Mordecai the *son* of Jair, the *son* of Shimei, the *son* of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Jew dwelling in the city of Susa, a great man, serving in the king's palace, saw a vision.

Now he was of the captivity which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried captive from Jerusalem, with Jeconiah the king of Judea. And this *was* his dream: Behold, voices and a noise, thunders and an earthquake, and tumult upon the earth. And behold, two great serpents came forth, both ready for conflict, and there came from them a great voice, and by their voice of every nation was prepared for battle, even to fight against the nation of the just. And behold, a day of darkness and blackness, tribulation and anguish, affliction and great tumult upon the earth. And all the righteous nation was troubled, fearing their own afflictions; and they prepared to die, and cried to God. And from their cry there came as it were a great river from a little fountain, *even* much water. And light and the sun arose, and the lowly were exalted, and devoured the honorable.

And Mordecai, who had seen this vision and what God designed to do, having awoke, kept in his heart, and desired by all means to interpret it, even till night. And Mordecai rested quiet in the palace with Gabatha and Tharra, the king's two chamberlains, eunuchs who guarded the palace.

And he heard their reasonings and searched out their plans, and learned that they were preparing to lay hands on King Artaxerxes. And he informed the king concerning them. And the king examined the two chamberlains, and they confessed, and were executed. And the king wrote these things for a memorial; also Mordecai wrote concerning these matters. And the king commanded Mordecai to attend in the palace, and gave him gifts for this service. And Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite was honorable in the sight of the king, and he endeavored to hurt Mordecai and his people, because of the two eunuchs of the king.]

### ESTHER CHAPTER 1

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass after these things in the days of Artaxerxes (this Artaxerxes ruled over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India), <sup>2</sup> in those days, when King Artaxerxes was on the throne in the city of Susa, <sup>3</sup> in the third year of his reign, he made a feast for his friends, and the other nations, and to the nobles of the Persians and Medes, and the chief of the satraps. <sup>4</sup> And after this, after he had shown to them the wealth of his kingdom, and the abundant glory of his wealth during a hundred and eighty days, <sup>5</sup> when the days of the marriage feast were completed, the king made a banquet for the nations who were present in the city six days, in the court of the king's house, <sup>6</sup> *which was* adorned with *hangings* of fine linen and flax on cords of fine linen and purple, fastened to golden and silver studs, on pillars of Parian marble and stone. *There were* golden and silver couches on a pavement of emerald stone, and of pearl, and of Parian stone, and open-worked coverings variously flowered, *having*

roses worked round about; <sup>7</sup> gold and silver cups, and a small cup of carbuncle set out of the value of thirty thousand talents, abundant and sweet wine, which the king himself drank. <sup>8</sup> And this banquet was not according to the appointed law; but so the king would have it: and he charged the stewards to perform his will and that of the company. <sup>9</sup> Also Vashti the queen made a banquet for the women in the palace where King Artaxerxes *dwelt*.

<sup>10</sup> Now on the seventh day the king, being merry, told Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Zethar, Abagtha, and Carcas, the seven eunuchs, servants of King Artaxerxes, <sup>11</sup> to bring the queen in to him, to enthrone her, and crown her with the diadem, and to show her to the princes, and her beauty to the nations, for she was beautiful. <sup>12</sup> But Queen Vashti would not heed the word to come with the chamberlains; so the king was grieved and angered. <sup>13</sup> And he said to his friends, "Thus has Vashti spoken: pronounce therefore upon this *case* law and judgment." <sup>14</sup> So Carshena, Shethar, and Malisear, the princes of the Persians and Medes, who were near the king, who sat chief *in rank* by the king, drew near to him, <sup>15</sup> and reported to him according to the laws how it was proper to do to Queen Vashti, because she had not done the things commanded of the king by the eunuchs. <sup>16</sup> And Memucan said to the king and to the princes, "Queen Vashti has not wronged the king only, but also all the king's rulers and princes; <sup>17</sup> for he has told them the words of the queen, and how she disobeyed the king. As then, *he said*, she refused *to obey* King Artaxerxes, <sup>18</sup> so this day shall the other women of the chiefs of the Persians and Medes, having heard what she said to the king, dare in the same way to dishonor their husbands. <sup>19</sup> If then it seem good to the king, let him make a royal decree, and let it be written according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, and let him not alter *it*. And let not the queen come in to him anymore, and let the king give her royalty to a woman better than she. <sup>20</sup> And let the law of the king which he shall have made, be widely proclaimed in his kingdom. And so shall all the women give honor to their husbands, from the poor, even to the rich." <sup>21</sup> And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did as Memucan had said, <sup>22</sup> and sent into all his kingdom through the several provinces, according to their language, in order that men might be feared in their own houses.