



## Purim / Lots

### Scroll of Esther

**Beit Emet Congregation ~ Vancouver, WA**

Ben Ehrhardt, Shamash

2/28/10

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At this time each year, just prior to the beginning of Spring, a big celebration takes place throughout Jewish communities around the world and most notably in Israel. It is the holiday known as Purim. Purim commemorates a time when the Yehudim (our brothers) living in Persia were saved from extermination, about 2,300 years ago. It is celebrated for two days, as we will see. The word "**Purim**" means "**lots**" and refers to the lottery that Haman used to choose the date for their massacre. It has come to be celebrated in a boisterous way, with costumes, masks, noisemakers, food, drink and music in a carnival like atmosphere; much like Mardi Gras.

The story of Purim is told in the book, or scroll, of **Esther**, in the TaNaK. You'll notice, in a few minutes, that **Esther** begins with "**And**" (a vav in Hebrew) denoting that its intended place is within a series of historical Hebrew writings. Over time, this book has come under much debate as to its authenticity. However, as Josephus points out, a copy of this scroll has been kept by the Levitical Priesthood since Zerubbabel, the priest, returned from the Babylonian captivity. The book of Esther is unusual in that it is the only book of the Bible that does not contain the name of Elohim. In fact, it includes virtually no reference to Yahweh. Mordecai makes one reference to the fact that the Yehudim will be saved by someone else, if not by Esther, but that is the closest the book comes to mentioning Elohim. Thus, one important message that can be gained from the story is that Yahweh often works in ways that are not apparent, in ways that appear to be chance, coincidence or ordinary luck.

The heroes of the story are Esther, a beautiful young Hebrew woman living in Persia, whose Hebrew name is Hadassah; and her cousin Mordecai, who raised her as if she were his daughter. Esther was taken to the house of Ahashwerosh, King of Persia, to become part of his harem. King Ahashwerosh came to love Esther more than any of his wives and made Esther queen. But, the king did not know that Esther was a Hebrew; because Mordecai told her not to reveal her identity.

The villain of this story is Haman, an arrogant, egotistical advisor to the king, who would become the king's Prime Minister. Haman is an interesting character in that his name means "**magnificent**". He was the son of Hammedatha, meaning "**the double**", as in "**double portion**". And he was an Agagite, meaning he was of Agag, the king of the Amaleqites. He was of the kingly line, or noble bloodline. As Torah and the histories tell us, the Amaleqites were enemies of Yisra'el since they attacked our forefathers in the wilderness. It was King Sha'ul (Saul) who was to put them all under the ban, according to **1 Shemu'el / Samuel 15**. But, Saul failed when he failed to fully carry out the word of

Yahweh. Thus, Haman was a sworn enemy of Yisra'el, who planned to exterminate all of the Yehudim in the Mede-Persian Empire; and no doubt beyond. In a speech that is all too familiar, Haman told the king, "*There are a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your realm. Their laws are different from those of every other people's, and they do not observe the king's laws; therefore it is not befitting the king to tolerate them.*" **Esther 3:8**. The king gave the fate of the Hebrew people to Haman, to do as he pleased to them.

Purim is celebrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> of Adar, which is usually in late February or early March. The 13<sup>th</sup> of Adar is the day that Haman chose for the extermination of the Yehudim (Judah), and the day that the Yehudim battled their enemies for their lives. On the day afterwards, the 14<sup>th</sup>, they celebrated their survival. In cities that were walled, Purim is celebrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, because the book of Esther says that in Shushan (a walled city), deliverance from the massacre was not complete until the next day. The 15<sup>th</sup> is referred to as Shushan Purim. In leap years, when there are two months of Adar, Purim is celebrated in the second month of Adar, so it is always one month before Passover. The 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first Adar in a leap year is celebrated as a minor holiday called "**Purim Katan**", which means "**little Purim**". There are no specific observances for Purim Katan; however according to Hebrew tradition, a person should celebrate the holiday and should not mourn or fast.

Let's begin with **Esther 1:1-12**; *And it came to be in the days of Ahashwerosh – he is the Ahashwerosh who reigned from India to Kush, a hundred and twenty-seven provinces – in those days, when Sovereign Ahashwerosh sat on the throne of his reign, which was in the citadel of Shushan, that in the third year of his reign he made a feast for all his officials and servants. The power of Persia and Media, the nobles and the princes of the provinces were before him, when he showed the riches of his esteemed reign and the splendor of his excellent greatness for many days, a hundred and eighty days. And when these days were completed, the sovereign made a feast lasting seven days for all the people who were present in the citadel of Shushan, from great to small, in the courtyard of the garden of the sovereign's palace. White and blue tapestries were fastened with cords of fine linen and purple on silver rods and marble columns – the couches were of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl, and black marble. And they served drinks in golden vessels, the vessels being different from one another, with much royal wine, according to the hand of the sovereign. And drinking was according to the law, no one was compelled, for so the sovereign had ordered all the officers of his house, that they should do according to each one's pleasure. Sovereigness Vashti also made a feast for the women in the royal palace which Sovereign Ahashwerosh owned. On the seventh day, when the heart of the sovereign was glad with wine, he ordered Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Karkas, the seven eunuchs who were in attendance in the presence of Sovereign Ahashwerosh, to bring Sovereigness Vashti before the sovereign, with her royal crown, in order to show her loveliness to the people and the officials, for she was lovely to look upon. But Sovereigness Vashti refused to come at the sovereign's command brought by his eunuchs. And the sovereign was very wroth, and his rage burned within him.*

To help our understanding, I want to take a minute here and give the meanings of some of these names. First, King "**Ahashwerosh**"; which is the Hebrew for Xerxes, the king's Greek name, who was sovereign in Persia at this time. His name in Hebrew means "**Lion King**". He was the son of Darius the Great and father of Darius the Mead and Artaxerxes, whom we'll read about in later studies. Then, we have his wife "**Vashti**" which is Persian for "**beautiful woman**". As for the seven "**eunuchs**"; the Hebrew word here is "**saw'reece'im**" and means "**ministers of the court**" or "**chamberlains**"; although, not necessarily "**castrated eunuchs**". This is the same word used to describe Dani'el in the court of Babel. The names of the chamberlains are Persian and all refer to wealth and power. These

names were probably given to these men as symbols of the king and kingdom they served. Now, the city of “**Shushan**” was one of the great walled cities of the Middle East. Its name means “*lily*” or a musical instrument whose “*pipes*” are shaped like lilies. An interesting side note here is that this instrument is referred to three times in **Dani’el 3** as being instruments in Nebukadnetstsar’s court. I bring this up because according to MacCorkill’s History of the Scottish Bagpipe, they originated in ancient Mesopotamia and were brought to Europe by the Romans.

Now, **Esther 1:13-22**; *So the sovereign said to the wise men who understood the times (for in this way the sovereign’s matter came before all who knew law and right-ruling, and who were close to him: Karshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, Memukan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who saw the sovereign’s face, who sat first in the reign):* “According to law, what is to be done to Sovereigness Vashti, because she did not perform the command of Sovereign Ahashwerosh, through the eunuchs?” And Memukan answered before the sovereign and the princes, “Sovereigness Vashti has misbehaved not only toward the sovereign, but also toward all the princes, and all the people who are in all the provinces of Sovereign Ahashwerosh. For the matter of the sovereigness shall go forth to all women, to make their husbands despised in their eyes, when they say, ‘Sovereign Ahashwerosh commanded Sovereigness Vashti to be brought in before him, but she did not come.’ And this day the princesses of Persia and Media shall say to all the sovereign’s officials that they have heard of the matter of the sovereigness – with plenty of scorn and wrath. If it pleases the sovereign, let a royal decree go out from him, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it does not pass away, that Vashti shall come no more before Sovereign Ahashwerosh. And let the sovereign give her royal position to another who is better than she. And the sovereign’s decree which he makes shall be proclaimed throughout all his rule, great as it is, and all the wives give esteem to their husbands, both great and small.” And the word was good in the eyes of the sovereign and the princes, and the sovereign did according to the word of Memukan. So he sent letters to all the sovereign’s provinces, to each province in its own writing, and to every people in their own language, that each man should be master in his own house and speak in the language of his people.

Here we have the seven Princes of Persia that sat alongside King Xerxes, “**Karshena**” (*Illustrious*), “**Shethar**” (*Star*), “**Admatha**” (*testimony*), “**Tarshish**” (*Subjection*), “**Meres**” (*Worthy*), “**Marsena**” (*Man*) and “**Memukan**” (*Dignified*).

Now, let’s read **Esther 2:1-11**; *After these events, when the wrath of Sovereign Ahashwerosh had ceased, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her. Then the sovereign’s servants who attended him said, “Let lovely young maidens be sought for the sovereign, and let the sovereign appoint officers in all the provinces of his reign, and let them gather all the lovely young maidens to the citadel of Shushan, into the women’s quarters, under the hand of Hegai (Persian word for “eunuch”) the sovereign’s eunuch, guardian of the women, to give their preparations. And let the young woman who pleases the sovereign be sovereigness instead of Vashti.” And the word pleased the sovereign, and he did so. In the citadel of Shushan there was a certain man, a Yehudite whose name was Mordechai son of Ya’ir, son of Shim’i, son of Qish, a Binyamite, who had been exiled from Yerushalayim with the captives who had been exiled with Yekonyah sovereign of Yehudah, whom Nebukadnetstsar the sovereign of Babel had exiled. And it came to be that he was raising Hadassah, that is Ester, his uncle’s daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and of good appearance. And when her father and mother died, Mordechai took her as his own daughter. And it came to be, when the sovereign’s command and decree were heard, and when many young women were gathered at the citadel of Shushan, into the hand of Hegai, that Ester,*

*too, was taken to the sovereign's palace, into the hand of Hegai, guardian of the women. And the young woman pleased him, and she received kindness from him. So he hastened to give her preparations and her portions, and gave her seven choice female servants from the sovereign's palace. And he moved her and her female servants to the best place in the house of the women. Ester had not made known her people or her relatives, for Mordechai had commanded her not to make it known. And every day Mordechai walked about in front of the courtyard of the women's quarters, to learn of Ester's welfare and what is done to her.*

Here we meet the Benjamite "**Mordechai**" or "**little man**" and, his cousin "**Hadassah**" meaning "**myrtle**" or "**sweetness**". The myrtle tree, in Scripture represents "**blessings from the mouth of Elohim**", as noted in Yeshayahu / Isaiah 55:10-56:1; "**For as the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so is My Word that goes forth from My mouth – it does not return to Me empty, but shall do what I please, and shall certainly accomplish what I sent it for. For with joy you go out, and with peace you are brought in – the mountains and the hills break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field clap the hands. Instead of the thorn the cypress comes up, and instead of the briar the myrtle comes up. And it shall be to YHVH for a name, for an everlasting sign which is not cut off.**" Thus said YHVH, "**Guard right-ruling, and do righteousness, for near is My deliverance to come, and My righteousness to be revealed.**" The name given Hadassah in Babylon was "**Esther**", which means "**star**" in Babylonian and Persian, and "**Venus**" in Greek and Latin. In Hebrew the name Esther is "**Ishtarrah**" for the goddess of Fortune. I think we'll stick to "**Hadassah**".

Let's pick it up with **Esther 2:12-23**; *Now when the turn of each young woman came to go in to Sovereign Ahashwerosh after she had completed twelve months according to the regulations for the women – for the days of their preparation were completed as follows: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and with the preparations of women – thus prepared, the young woman went to the sovereign, and whatever she asked for was given to take with her from the house of the women to the sovereign's palace. In the evening she went, and in the morning she returned to the second house of the women, into the hand of Sha'ashgaz (literally, "servant of the beautiful" in Persian), the sovereign's eunuch, guardian of the concubines. She would not come in to the sovereign again unless the sovereign delighted in her and called for her by name. And when the turn came for Ester, the daughter of Abihayil the uncle of Mordechai, who had taken her as his daughter, to come in to the sovereign, she sought no matter but what Hegai the sovereign's eunuch, guardian of the women, advised. And Ester found favour in the eyes of all who saw her. And Ester was taken to Sovereign Ahashwerosh, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. And the sovereign loved Ester more than all the women, and she found favour and kindness in his eyes more than all the maidens. And he set the royal crown upon her head and made her sovereignness instead of Vashti. And the sovereign made a great feast, the Feast of Ester, for all his officials and servants. And he proclaimed a release in the provinces and gave gifts according to the means of a sovereign. And when maidens were assembled a second time, Mordechai sat within the sovereign's gate. Ester had not made known her relatives and her people yet, as Mordechai commanded her, for Ester obeyed the command of Mordechai as when she was being raised by him. In those days, while Mordechai sat within the sovereign's gate, two of the sovereign's eunuchs, Bigthan (gift of fortune) and Teresh (severe), door-keepers, were wroth and sought to lay hands on Sovereign Ahashwerosh. And the matter became known to Mordechai, who informed Sovereignness Ester, and Ester spoke to the sovereign in Mordechai's name. And when the matter was searched into, it was confirmed, and both were impaled on a stake. And it was written in the book of the annals in the presence of*

the sovereign.

Now, **Esther 3:1-15**; *After these events Sovereign Ahashwerosh promoted Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and exalted him and seated him higher than all the princes with him. And all the sovereign's servants who were in the sovereign's gate bowed and did obeisance to Haman, for so the sovereign had commanded concerning him. But Mordechai would not bow or do obeisance. And the sovereign's servants who were in the sovereign's gate said to Mordechai, "Why do you disobey the sovereign's command?" And it came to be, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told Haman, to see whether the words of Mordechai would stand – for he had told them that he was a Yehudite. And when Haman saw that Mordechai did not bow or do obeisance, Haman was filled with wrath. But it was despicable in his eyes to lay hands on Mordechai alone, for they had informed him of the people of Mordechai. Therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Yehudim who were throughout all the reign of Ahashwerosh, the people of Mordechai. In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of Sovereign Ahashwerosh, someone cast Pur – that is, the lot – before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, until it fell on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. Haman then told Sovereign Ahashwerosh, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your reign, whose laws are different from all people, and they do not do the sovereign's laws. Therefore it is not in the sovereign's interest to let them remain. If it pleases the sovereign, let a decree be written to destroy them, and let me pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the sovereign's treasuries." And the sovereign took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Yehudim. And the sovereign said to Haman, "The silver and the people are given to you, to do with them as seems good to you." And the sovereign's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and a decree was written according to all that Haman commanded – to the viceroys of the sovereign, and to the governors who were over each province, and to the officials of all people, to every province according to its writing, and to every people in their language. It was written in the name of Sovereign Ahashwerosh, and sealed with the sovereign's signet ring. And the letters were sent by the runners into all the sovereign's provinces, to cut off, to slay, and to destroy all the Yehudim, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions. A copy of the writing, to be made law in every province, was published for all people, to be ready for that day. The runners went out, hastened by the sovereign's command, and the decree was given out in the citadel of Shushan. The sovereign and Haman then sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was in confusion.*

Let's go on with **Esther 4:1-17**; *And Mordechai learned of all that had been done, and Mordechai tore his garments and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried out with a loud and bitter cry. And he went up to the front of the sovereign's gate, for no one might enter the sovereign's gate wearing sackcloth. And in every province where the sovereign's command and decree came, there was great mourning among the Yehudim, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing. And many lay in sackcloth and ashes. And Ester's young women and eunuchs came and told her, and the sovereigness was deeply pained, and sent garments to Mordechai to wear, and to take away his sackcloth from him, but he refused. And Ester called Hathak (Persian for "truth"), one of the sovereign's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordechai, to learn what and why this was. And Hathak went out to Mordechai, to an open space of the city, in front of the sovereign's gate. And Mordechai told him all that befell him, and all about the silver that Haman*

*promised to pay into the sovereign's treasuries to destroy the Yehudim. And he gave him a copy of the written decree to destroy them, which was given at Shushan, to show it to Ester and explain it to her, and to command her to go in to the sovereign to make supplication to him, and plead before him for her people. And Hathak came and told Ester the words of Mordechai. And Ester spoke to Hathak, and gave him a command for Mordechai, "All the sovereign's servants and the people of the sovereign's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the sovereign, who has not been called, he has but one law: to be put to death, except the one to whom the sovereign holds out the golden sceptre, who then shall live. But I have not been called to come in to the sovereign these thirty days." And they declared to Mordechai the words of Ester. And Mordechai commanded them to answer Ester, "Do not think within yourself to escape in the sovereign's palace any more than all the other Yehudim. For if you keep entirely silent at this time, relief and deliverance shall arise for the Yehudim from another place, while you and your father's house perish. And who knows whether you have come to the reign for such a time as this?" And Ester commanded to reply to Mordechai, "Go, gather all the Yehudim who are present in Shushan, and fast for me, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I too, and my young women shall fast in the same way, then I shall go to the sovereign, which is against the law. And if I shall perish, I shall perish!" Mordechai then went away and did according to all that Ester commanded him.*

**Esther 5:1-14;** *And it came to be on the third day that Ester put on royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the sovereign's palace, in front of the sovereign's house, while the sovereign sat on his royal throne in the royal house, opposite the entrance of the house. And it came to be, when the sovereign saw Sovereigness Ester standing in the court, that she found favour in his eyes, and the sovereign held out to Ester the golden sceptre which was in his hand. And Ester went near and touched the top of the sceptre. And the sovereign said to her, "What is it, Sovereigness Ester, and what is your request? Up to half my reign, and it is given to you!" And Ester answered, "If it pleases the sovereign, let the sovereign and Haman come today to the feast which I have prepared for him." And the sovereign said, "Get Haman at once, to do as Ester has said." Then the sovereign and Haman went to the feast which Ester had prepared. And the sovereign said to Ester at the feast of wine, "What is your petition? And it is given you. And what is your request? Up to half my reign, and it is done!" And Ester answered and said, "My petition and request is this: If I have found favour in the eyes of the sovereign, and if it pleases the sovereign to give my petition and perform my request, then let the sovereign and Haman come to the feast which I make for them, and tomorrow I shall do according to the word of the sovereign." And Haman went out that day rejoicing and with a glad heart. But when Haman saw Mordechai in the sovereign's gate, and that he did not stand up or tremble before him, he was filled with wrath against Mordechai. But Haman held himself in, and came to his house, and he sent and called for his friends and Zeresh (Persian for "gold") his wife. And Haman recounted to them the esteem of his wealth, and his many sons, and all in which the sovereign had promoted him, and how he had exalted him above the officials and servants of the sovereign. And Haman said, "Besides, Ester the sovereigness let no one but me come in with the sovereign to the feast which she prepared. And tomorrow too I am invited by her, along with the sovereign. But all this does not suit me, as long as I see Mordechai the Yehudite sitting at the sovereign's gate." So his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a stake be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak to the sovereign that Mordechai be impaled on it. And go with the sovereign to the feast, rejoicing." And the word pleased Haman, and he had the stake made.*

**Esther 6:1-14;** *On that night the sleep of the sovereign fled, and he commanded to bring the book of the records of the annals. And they were read before the sovereign. And it was found*

written that Mordechai had told of Bigthan and Teresh, two of the sovereign's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on Sovereign Ahashwerosh. Then the sovereign said, "What has been done in value or in greatness to Mordechai for this?" And the sovereign's servants who attended him said, "Naught has been done for him." And the sovereign said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had come into the outer court of the sovereign's palace to speak to the sovereign to impale Mordechai on the stake that he had prepared for him. And the sovereign's servants said to him, "Look, Haman is standing in the court." And the sovereign said, "Let him come in." And when Haman came in, the sovereign asked him, "What is to be done for the man whom the sovereign delights to value?" Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the sovereign delight to value more than me?" And Haman answered the sovereign, "For the man whom the sovereign delights to value, let a royal robe be brought which the sovereign has worn, and a horse on which the sovereign has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. And let this robe and horse be given into the hand of one of the sovereign's most noble princes. Let them dress the man whom the sovereign delights to value. And make him ride on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, 'Thus it is done to the man whom the sovereign delights to value!' " And the sovereign said to Haman, "Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have spoken, and do so for Mordechai the Yehudite who sits in the sovereign's gate. Let no word fail of all that you have spoken." And Haman took the robe and the horse, and robed Mordechai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus it is done to the man the sovereign delights to value." Then Mordechai went back to the sovereign's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with covered head. And when Haman related to his wife Zeresh and all his friends all that had befallen him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordechai, before whom you have begun to fall, is from the seed of the Yehudim, you are not going to prevail against him but certainly fall before him." While they were still speaking with him, the sovereign's eunuchs came, and hurried to bring Haman to the feast which Ester had prepared.

**Esther 7:1-10;** And the sovereign and Haman came in, to drink with Sovereigness Ester. And again on the second day, at the feast of wine, the sovereign said to Ester, "What is your petition, Sovereigness Ester? And it is given to you. And what is your request? Up to half my reign, and it is done!" And Sovereigness Ester answered and said, "If I have found favour in your eyes, O sovereign, and if it pleases the sovereign, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. For we have been sold, my people and I, to be cut off, to be slain, and to be destroyed. And if we had been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept silent, although the adversary could not make up for the sovereign's loss." Then Sovereign Ahashwerosh asked Sovereigness Ester, "Who is he, and where is he, whose heart is set to do so?" And Ester said, "The adversary and enemy is this evil Haman!" Then Haman was afraid before the sovereign and sovereigness. And the sovereign, arising in his wrath from the feast of wine, went into the palace garden. And Haman remained before Sovereigness Ester, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil had been decided against him by the sovereign. And when the sovereign returned from the palace garden to the place of the feast of wine, Haman was falling on the couch where Ester was. Then the sovereign said, "Also to ravish the sovereigness while I am in the house?" As the word left the sovereign's mouth, they covered Haman's face. And Harbona (literally Persian for "ass" or "donkey driver), one of the eunuchs, said to the sovereign, "Also, see the stake, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordechai, who spoke good on behalf of the sovereign, is standing at the house of Haman." And the sovereign said, "Impale him on it!" And they impaled Haman on the stake that he had prepared for Mordechai, and the sovereign's wrath abated.

**Esther 8<sup>1-17</sup>**; *On that day Sovereign Ahashwerosh gave to Sovereigness Ester the house of Haman, the adversary of the Yehudim. And Mordechai came before the sovereign, for Ester had explained what he was to her. And the sovereign took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordechai. And Ester appointed Mordechai over the house of Haman. And Ester spoke to the sovereign again, and fell down at his feet and begged him with tears to put an end to the evil of Haman the Agagite, and his plot which he had plotted against the Yehudim. And the sovereign held out the golden sceptre toward Ester. And Ester arose and stood before the sovereign, and said, "If it pleases the sovereign, and if I have found favour in his sight and the matter is right before the sovereign and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to bring back the letters, the plot by Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Yehudim who are in all the sovereign's provinces. For how could I bear to see the evil coming to my people? Or how could I bear to see the destruction of my relatives?" And Sovereign Ahashwerosh said to Sovereigness Ester and Mordechai the Yehudite, "Look, I have given Ester the house of Haman, and they have impaled him on the stake because he laid his hand on the Yehudim. Now you write on behalf of the Yehudim, as it pleases you, in the sovereign's name, and seal it with the sovereign's signet ring. For a letter which is written in the sovereign's name and sealed with the sovereign's signet ring no one turns back." So the sovereign's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Siwan, on the twenty-third day. And it was written, according to all that Mordechai commanded to the Yehudim, and to the viceroys, and the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Kush, a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, to every province in its own writing, to every people in their own language, and to the Yehudim in their own writing, and in their own language. And he wrote in the name of Sovereign Ahashwerosh, and sealed it with the sovereign's signet ring, and sent letters by runners on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from speedy mares: That the sovereign has granted to the Yehudim who were in every city to be assembled and stand for their lives – to cut off, to slay, and to destroy all the power of the people or province that would distress them, little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, on one day in all the provinces of Sovereign Ahashwerosh, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. The copy of the writing to be made law in every province was announced to all the peoples, so that the Yehudim would be ready on that day to be avenged on their enemies. The runners, riding on royal horses, went out, hastened and pressed on by the sovereign's command. And the decree was given out in the citadel of Shushan. And Mordechai went out from the presence of the sovereign wearing royal garments of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple. And the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. For the Yehudim there was light and gladness and joy and value. And in every province and in every city where the sovereign's command and decree came, the Yehudim had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land were becoming Yehudim, for the fear of the Yehudim had fallen upon them.*

**Esther 9:1-16**; *And in the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, when the sovereign's command and his decree came to be done, on the day that the enemies of the Yehudim had waited to overpower them, it turned around, so that the Yehudim overpowered those who hated them. The Yehudim assembled in their cities, throughout all the provinces of Sovereign Ahashwerosh to lay hands on those who sought their evil. And no one stood against them, because fear of them fell upon all people. And all the officials of the provinces, and the viceroys, and the governors, and all those doing the sovereign's work, helped the Yehudim, because the fear of Mordechai fell upon them. For Mordechai was great in the palace of the sovereign, and his report spread into all the provinces, for this man Mordechai became greater and greater. And the Yehudim smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, with*

*slaughter and destruction, and did what they pleased to those who hated them. And in the citadel of Shushan the Yehudim slew and destroyed five hundred men. And they slew Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha, and Poratha, and Adalya, and Aridatha, and Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Wayezatha, the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Yehudim. But they did not lay a hand on the plunder. On that day the number of those who were slain in the citadel of Shushan came before the sovereign. And the sovereign said to Sovereigness Ester, "The Yehudim have slain and destroyed five hundred men in the citadel of Shushan, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the sovereign's provinces? And what is your petition? And it is given to you. And what is your further request? And it is done." And Ester said, "If it pleases the sovereign, let it be given to the Yehudim who are in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be impaled on the stake." And the sovereign commanded this to be done. And the decree was given in Shushan, and they impaled Haman's ten sons. And the Yehudim who were in Shushan also assembled on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and they slew three hundred men at Shushan. But they did not lay a hand on the plunder. And the rest of the Yehudim in the sovereign's provinces assembled and stood for their lives, and to get rest from their enemies, and to slay seventy-five thousand of their enemies. But they did not lay a hand on the plunder.*

Haman had 10 sons, "Parshandatha", "Dalphon", "Aspatha", "Poratha", "Adalya", "Aridatha", "Parmashta", "Arisai", "Aridai" and "Wayezatha". As with the other Persian names in this story, they all have meanings revolving around "**fortune**" and the deities that supposedly bring it.

Now, **Esther 9:17-32**; *That was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth day of the month they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness. But the Yehudim who were at Shushan assembled on the thirteenth day, as well as on the fourteenth day. And on the fifteenth day of the month they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. Therefore the Yehudim of the villages who dwelt in the unwallied towns were making the fourteenth day of the month of Adar a good day of gladness and feasting, and for sending portions to one another. And Mordechai wrote these matters and sent letters to all the Yehudim who were in all the provinces of Sovereign Ahashwerosh, both near and far, to establish among them, to observe the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar, yearly, as the days on which the Yehudim had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a good day, that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending portions to one another and gifts to the poor. And the Yehudim undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordechai had written to them, because Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the adversary of all the Yehudim, had plotted against the Yehudim to destroy them, and had cast Pur – that is, the lot – to crush them and to destroy them. But when she came before the sovereign, he commanded by letter that his evil plot which Haman had plotted against the Yehudim should return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be impaled on the stake. Therefore they called these days Purim, after the name Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had come upon them, the Yehudim established and imposed it upon themselves and upon their seed and all who should join them, that without fail they should observe these two days every year, according to their writing and at their appointed time, and that these days should be remembered and observed throughout every generation, every clan, every province, and every city, and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Yehudim, and that the remembrance of them should not cease from their seed. And Sovereigness Ester, the daughter of Abihayil, with Mordechai the Yehudite, wrote with all authority to confirm this second letter about Purim. And Mordechai sent letters to all the Yehudim, to the hundred and twenty-seven*

*provinces of the reign of Ahashwerosh, words of peace and truth, to establish these days of Purim at their appointed times, as Mordechai the Yehudite and Sovereign Ester had established for them, and as they had established for themselves and their seed concerning matters of their fastings and lamenting. And the decree of Ester established these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.*

We finish with, **Esther 10:1-3**; *And Sovereign Ahashwerosh laid compulsory labor on the land and the islands of the sea. And all the acts of his power and his might, and the exact account of the greatness of Mordechai, with which the sovereign made him great, are they not written in the book of the annals of the sovereigns of Media and Persia? For Mordechai the Yehudite was second to Sovereign Ahashwerosh, and great among the Yehudim and pleasing to his many brothers, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his seed.*

While there are many things we can learn from this history, two very important pictures emerge. We've seen it before and we'll see it again in the future. The "**enemy**" or "**adversary**" will try to eliminate and utterly destroy Yahweh's chosen. In the days ahead, in Ya'acov's Trouble, the adversary will seek to destroy those keeping the commands and possessing the testimony of Yahshua, as **Revelation 12:17** tells us; *And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to fight with the remnant of her seed, those guarding the commands of Elohim and possessing the witness of Yahshua Messiah.* However, Baruch HaShem Yahweh, our Deliverer will save us.

It's interesting that four times in Esther; Haman is called the "**enemy**" and/or "**adversary**" of the Yehudim, or Judah. The Northern Kingdom was already in exile when the Purim story takes place; or, it would have been written, that Haman was the "**enemy**" of Yisra'el. This is borne out in **Bemidbar / Numbers**, at the telling of the attack of the Amaleqites. Depending on the verse, the words "**tsar**" and "**tsara**" are used to mean "**adversary**". Both mean "**to bind**" or "**tie up**", to "**restrict**" or "**cause distress**" and "**to vex**" or "**harass**". We also see the Hebrew word "**oyeb**" in **Chapter 7 verse 6**, which also means "**persecutor**" or "**one who hates**". It's no coincidence that these definitions also apply to "**ha satan**", which directly translates as "**the adversary**" or "**the enemy**", as well as "**one who withstands**" or "**stands against**". This is also a perfect picture of "anti-messiah" who also represents ha satan in the flesh, as Haman did.

The other picture here is "**how**" the *adversary's* plans are thwarted. It all hinged on obedience. When Mordechai heard the news of Haman's plan, he put on sackcloth, representing repentance and mourning; and he "**fasted**". In fact, all the Yehudim throughout the Mede-Persian Empire fasted, even Hadassah. There's a big lesson to learn here. You see the "**adversary**", an Amaleqite, should have been done away with long before. But, as I said earlier, King Saul blew it. I encourage you to read **1 Samuel 15**; which is the story of Saul's rebellion against Yahweh's word, through Samuel. Saul did not put all of the Amaleqites under the ban as he was supposed to do. So, the Yehudim had Haman to deal with generations later. Samuel tells King Saul in **verses 17-19**; *And Shemu'el said, "Though you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Yisra'el? And did not YHVH anoint you sovereign over Yisra'el? And YHVH sent you on the way, and said, 'Go, and you shall put under the ban the sinners, the Amaleqites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' And why did you not obey the voice of YHVH, but swooped down on the spoil, and did evil in the eyes of YHVH?"* Samuel goes on in **verses 22-23**; *Then Shemu'el said, "Does YHVH delight in burnt offerings and slaughterings, as in obeying the voice of YHVH? Look, to obey is better than an offering, to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness is as wickedness and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of YHVH, He also does reject you as sovereign."*

Family, we need to learn how to wear sackcloth, to mourn over our sins, as we come to Yahweh in repentance. We need to learn how to fast the “**tov fast**”, as **Yeshayahu / Isaiah** taught. For more on fasting & prayer, please see: [http://www.hearoisrael.org/uploads/Fasting\\_Prayer.pdf](http://www.hearoisrael.org/uploads/Fasting_Prayer.pdf) . As we seek Him with fasting, prayer and teshuva, ask Him to bring us into obedience. When we are in obedience to our Shepherd and Deliverer, He will watch over His flock and deliver us from those stronger than us. The decrees of the adversary are nullified and turned on those who plot and scheme against the chosen people of the Holy One of Israel.

***Baruch HaShem YHVH !***

And, ***Chag Sameach!!!!***