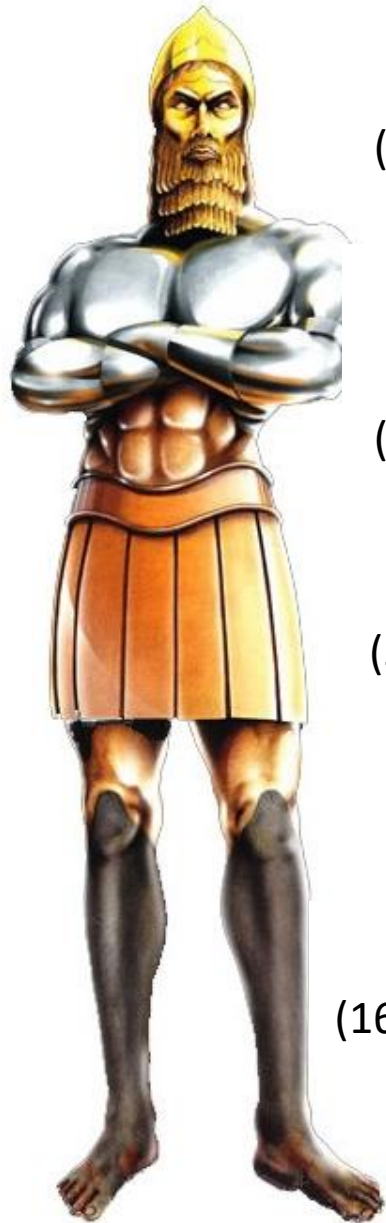


Esther: An Unlikely Saviour

1. Queen Esther Chosen



Daniel 2



Babylon
(605-539 BC)

**Medo-
Persia**
(539-331 BC)

Greece
(331–168 BC)

Rome
(168 BC– 476 AD)

Daniel 7



Daniel 11

And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and **the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.** Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

(Daniel 11:2–3).

- ❖ Cambyses 530-522
- ❖ Smerdis 522
- ❖ Darius 1 522-486
- ❖ **Xerxes 1 486-465**



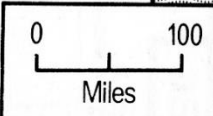
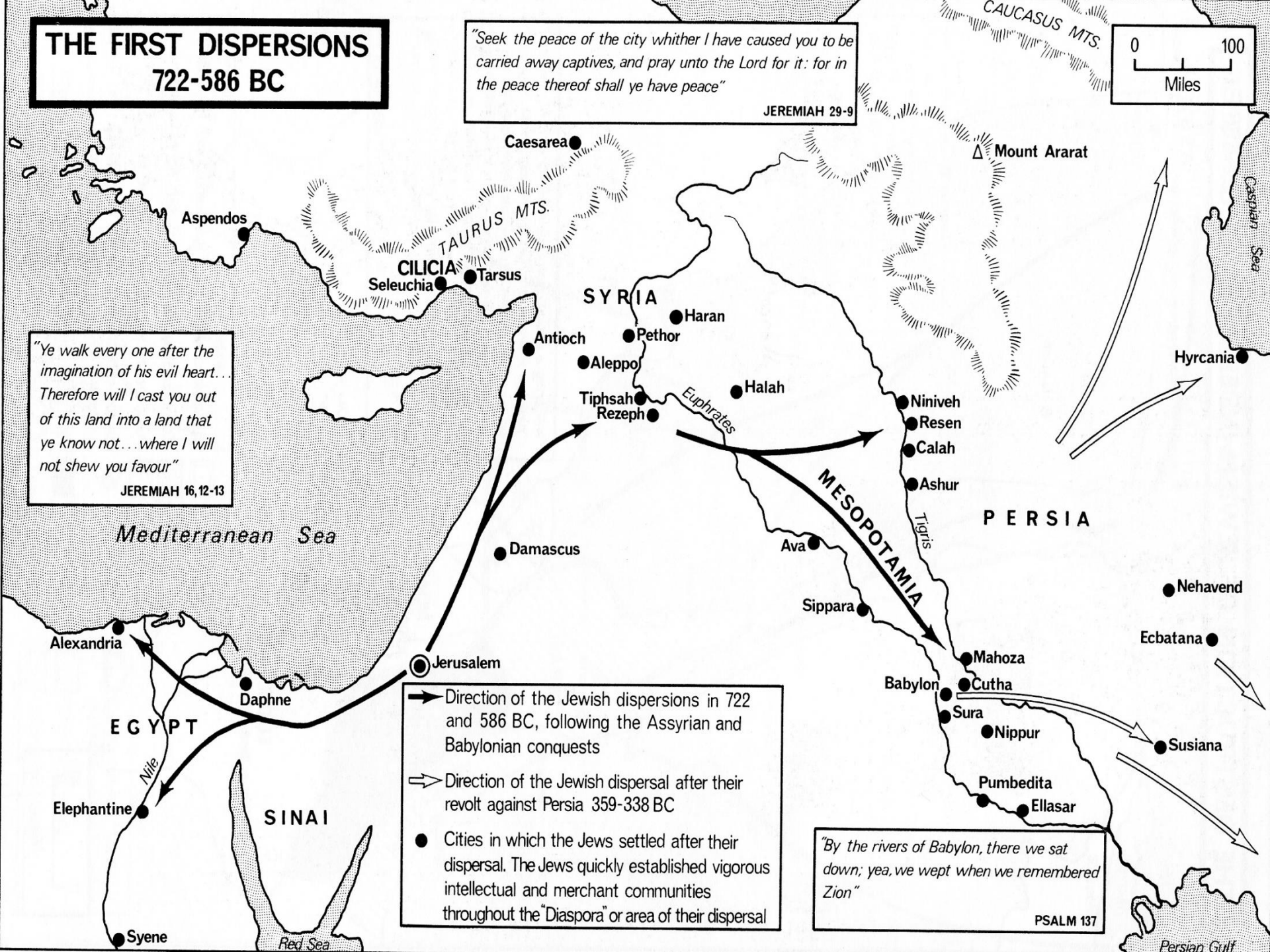
THE FIRST DISPERSIONS 722-586 BC

"Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace"

JEREMIAH 29-9

"Ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart... Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not... where I will not shew you favour"

JEREMIAH 16, 12-13

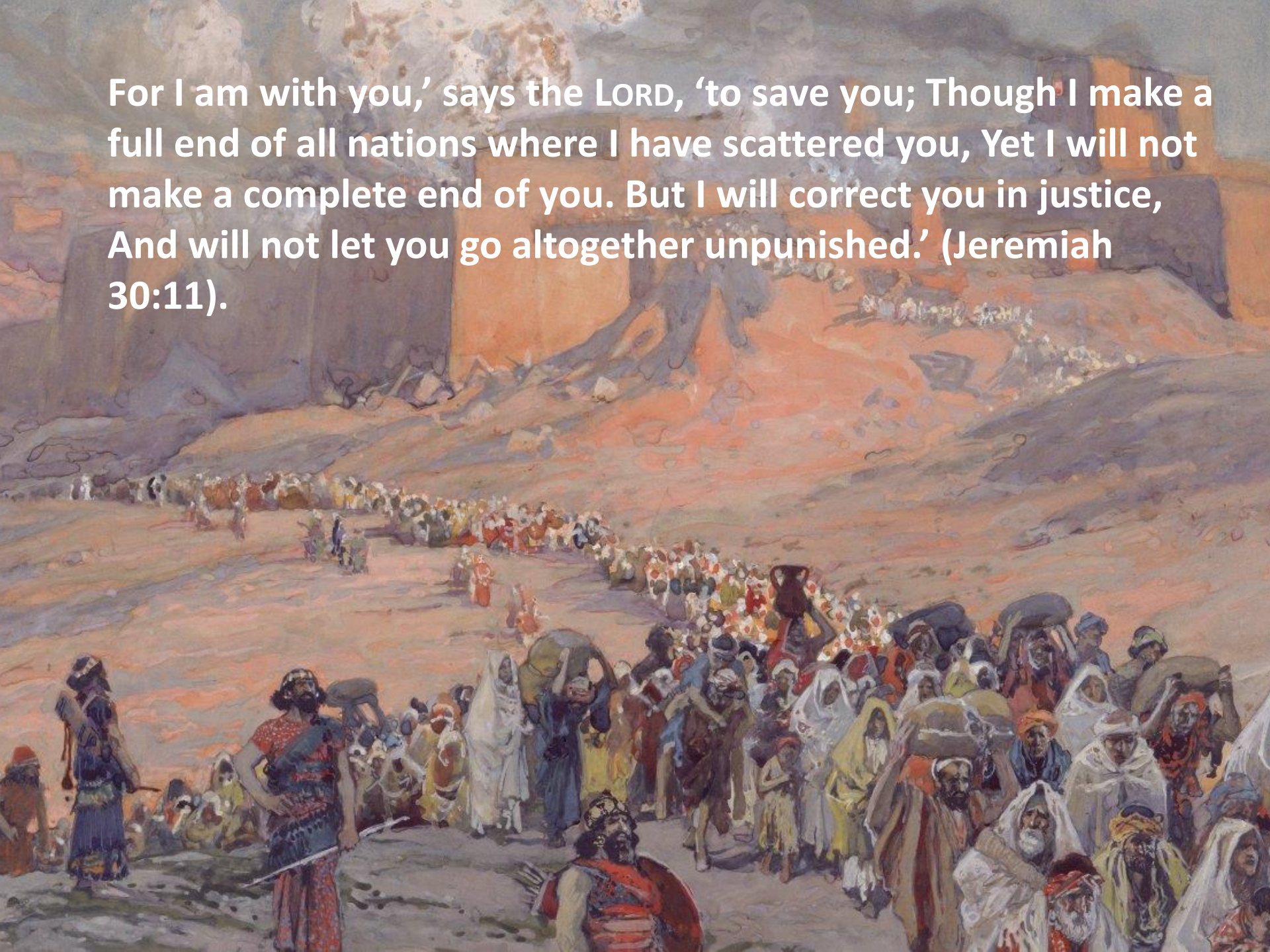


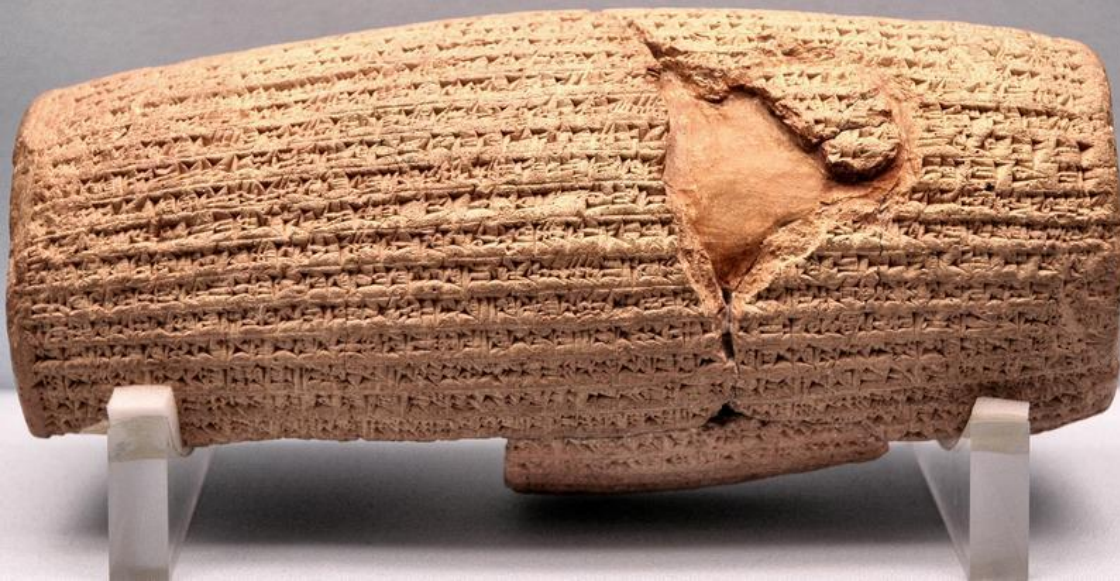
- ➔ Direction of the Jewish dispersions in 722 and 586 BC, following the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests
- ⇨ Direction of the Jewish dispersal after their revolt against Persia 359-338 BC
- Cities in which the Jews settled after their dispersal. The Jews quickly established vigorous intellectual and merchant communities throughout the "Diaspora" or area of their dispersal

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion"

PSALM 137

For I am with you,' says the LORD, 'to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.' (Jeremiah 30:11).





Cyrus Cylinder: 539-530BC

From [?] to [Aššur](#) and [from] [Susa](#), [Agade](#), [Ešnunna](#), Zabban, Me-Turnu, [Der](#), as far as the region of [Gutium](#), the sacred centres on the other side of the [Tigris](#), whose sanctuaries had been abandoned for a long time, **I returned the images of the gods, who had resided there [i.e., in Babylon], to their places and I let them dwell in eternal abodes. I gathered all their inhabitants and returned to them their dwellings.**

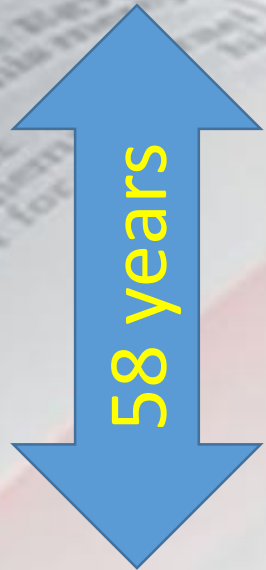
Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying ...

(Ezra 1:1).



Dates	Reigns	Date	Jewish Events
605-562 BC	Nebuchadnezzar (King of Babylon)	586	Jerusalem destroyed Remaining Jews taken to Babylon
Jewish Exile: Deportation by Nebuchadnezzar (586)			
539-530	Cyrus (King of Persia)	539	Fall of Babylon
Jewish Return: Decree of Cyrus (538)			
530-522	Cambyses		
521-486	Darius 1, Hystaspes	516	Temple building completed
486-464	Xerxes (Ahasuerus)		
464-423	Artaxerxes 1 (Longimanus)	458 445	Ezra to Jerusalem Nehemiah to Jerusalem

516 BC



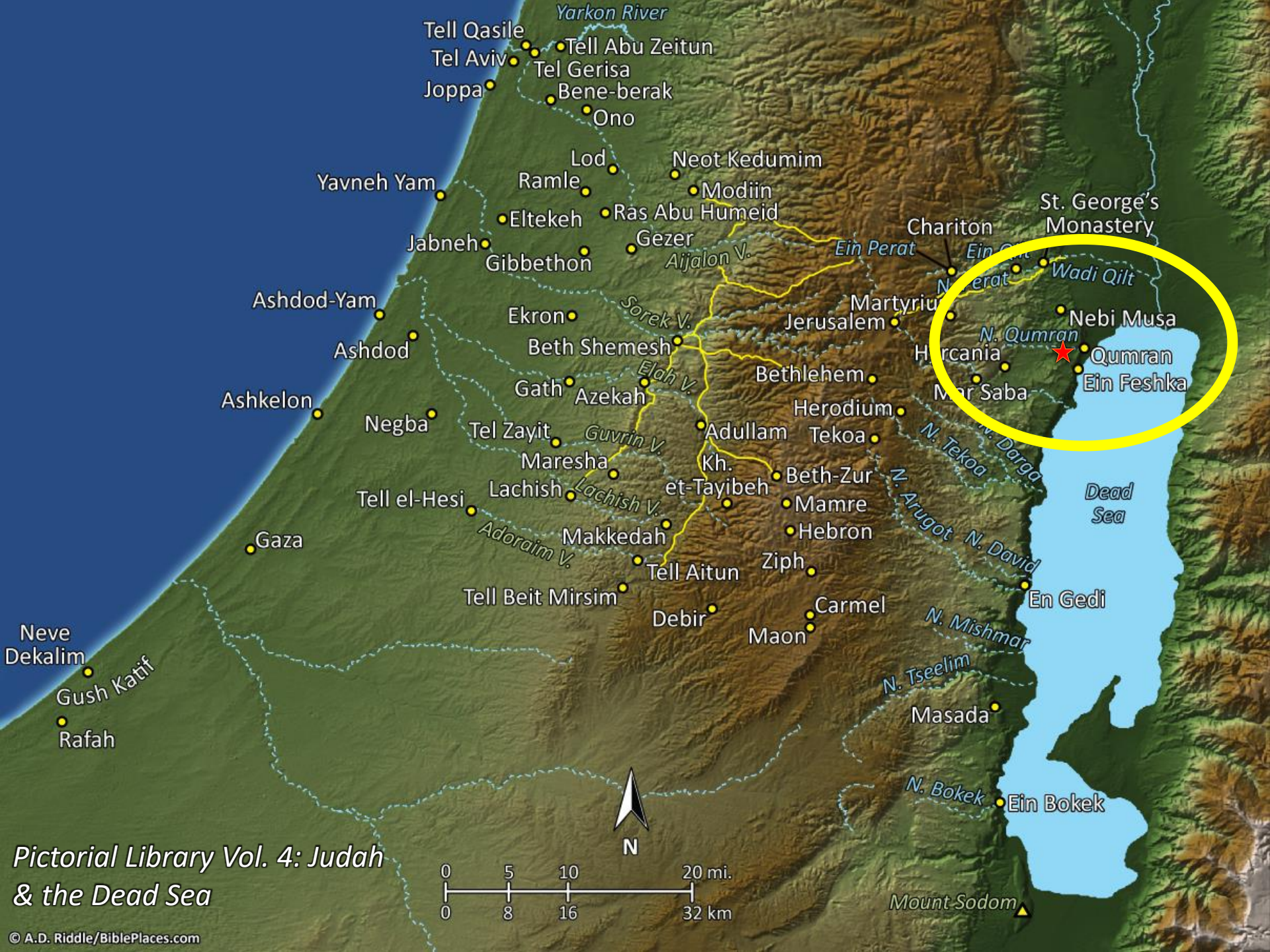
And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month ... And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy; for the LORD made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria [**Darius**, see 6:15] toward them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel. (Ezra 6:19–22)

The Book of Esther

458 BC

Now after these things, in the reign of **Artaxerxes** king of Persia, Ezra ... came up from Babylon; and he was a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. (Ezra 7:1–6)





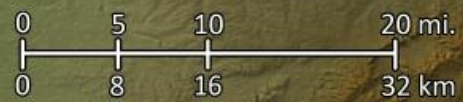
Tell Qasile
Tel Aviv
Joppa
Tel Abu Zeitun
Tel Gerisa
Bene-berak
Ono

Lod
Neot Kedumim
Yavneh Yam
Ramle
Modiin
Eltekeh
Ras Abu Humeid
Gibbethon
Gezer
Aijalon V.
Ein Perat

Ashdod-Yam
Ashdod
Ekron
Beth Shemesh
Gath
Azekah
Jerusalem
Martyrius
Harcania
N. Qumran
Nebi Musa
Qumran
Ein Feshka
Mar Saba

Ashkelon
Negba
Tel Zayit
Maresha
Lachish
Lachish V.
Bethlehem
Herodium
Tekoa
Adullam
Kh.
et-Tayibeh
Beth-Zur
Mamre
Hebron

Gaza
Tell el-Hesi
Makkedah
Tell Beit Mirsim
Debir
Maon
Carmel
En Gedi
Masada
Ein Bokek
Gush Katif
Rafah
Neve Dekalim



*Pictorial Library Vol. 4: Judah
& the Dead Sea*



Qumran ruins and caves (aerial view)



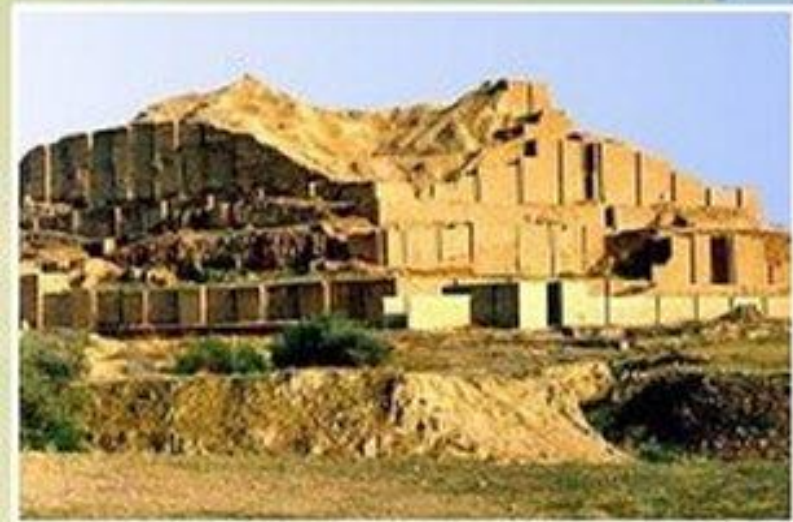
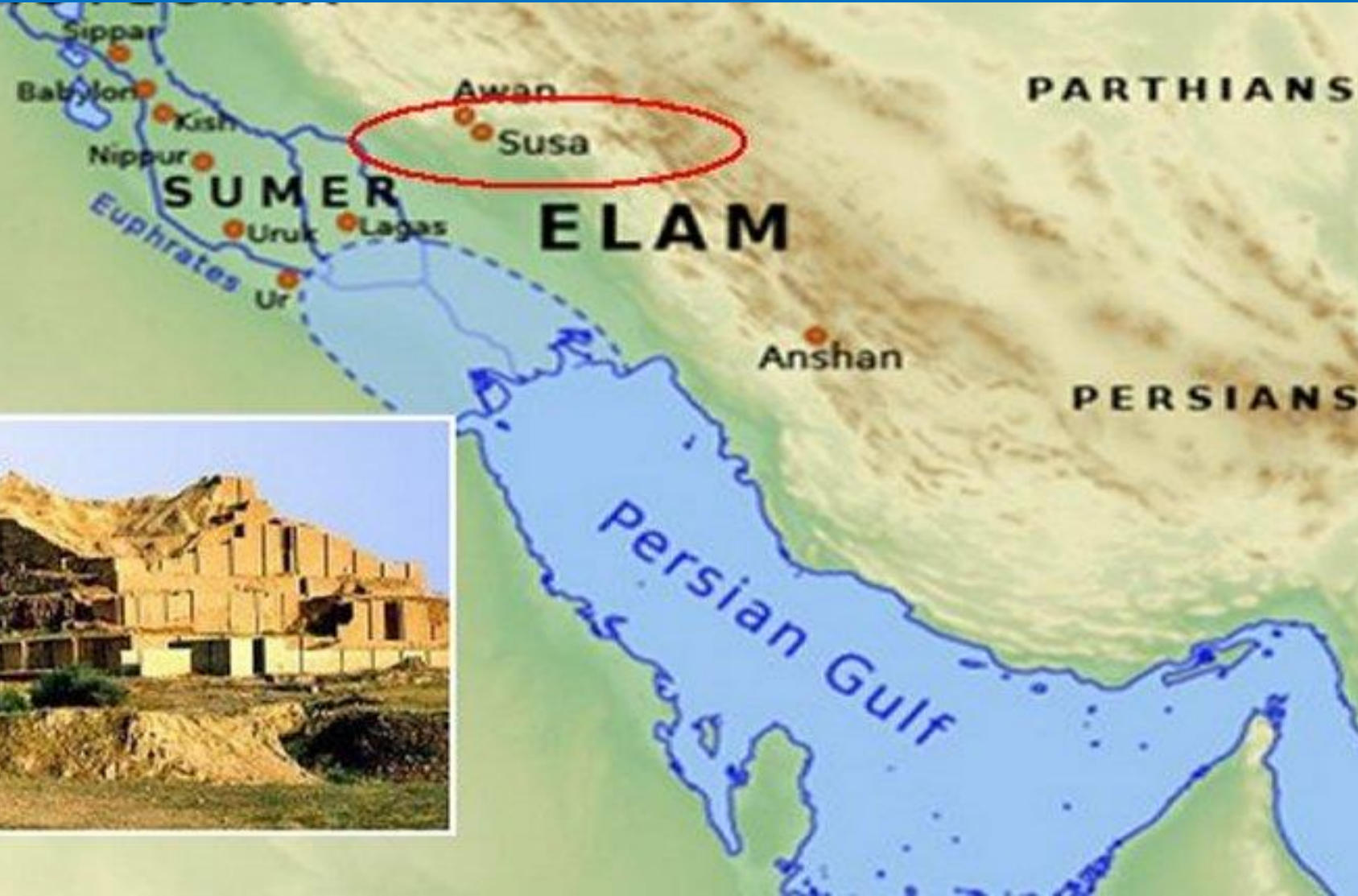




FEAST OF PURIM



Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus (this was the Ahasuerus who reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia), in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the citadel... (Esther 1:1–2).





Susa: The Palace (Reconstructed)



...that in the third year of his reign he made a feast for all his officials and servants—the powers of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces being before him— (Esther 1:3).



جلسه پادشاهی
فرمانروایی
حکومت



... when he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendour of his excellent majesty for many days, **one hundred and eighty days in all**. And when these days were completed, the king made a feast lasting **seven days** for all the people who were present in Shushan the citadel, from great to small, in the court of the garden of the king's palace. (Esther 1:4–5).



...that in the third year of his reign he made a feast for all his officials and servants—the powers of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces being before him— (Esther 1:3).



And when these days were completed, the king made a feast lasting **seven days** for all the people who were present in Shushan the citadel, from great to small, in the court of the garden of the king's palace. (Esther 1:4–5).



THRACE
MACEDONIA
GREECE
IONIA

Black Sea

CAUCASUS MTS.

Caspian Sea

Aral Sea

ANATOLIA

ARMENIA

Sardis
Ephesus
LYDIA

Mediterranean Sea

Euphrates R.

Tigris R.

BABYLONIA

Susa

PERSIA

Persepolis

HINDU KUSH

Indus R.

Persian Gulf

EGYPT

SAHARA

Nile R.

Red Sea

ARABIA

Arabian Sea

 Persian Empire, 500 B.C.E.
 Royal road

0 250 500 miles
0 250 500 kilometers

Daniel 2



Babylon
(605-539 BC)

**Medo-
Persia**
(539-331 BC)

Greece
(331–168 BC)

Rome
(168 BC– 476 AD)

Daniel 7



And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, **through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.** Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

(Daniel 11:2–3).

- ❖ Cambyses 530-522
- ❖ Smerdis 522
- ❖ Darius 1 522-486
- ❖ **Xerxes 1 486-465**





Queen Vashti also made a feast for the women in the royal palace which belonged to King Ahasuerus (Esther 1:9).

On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he **commanded ... to bring Queen Vashti before the king**, wearing her royal crown, in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials, for she was beautiful to behold.

But Queen Vashti refused to come (Esther 1:10–12).



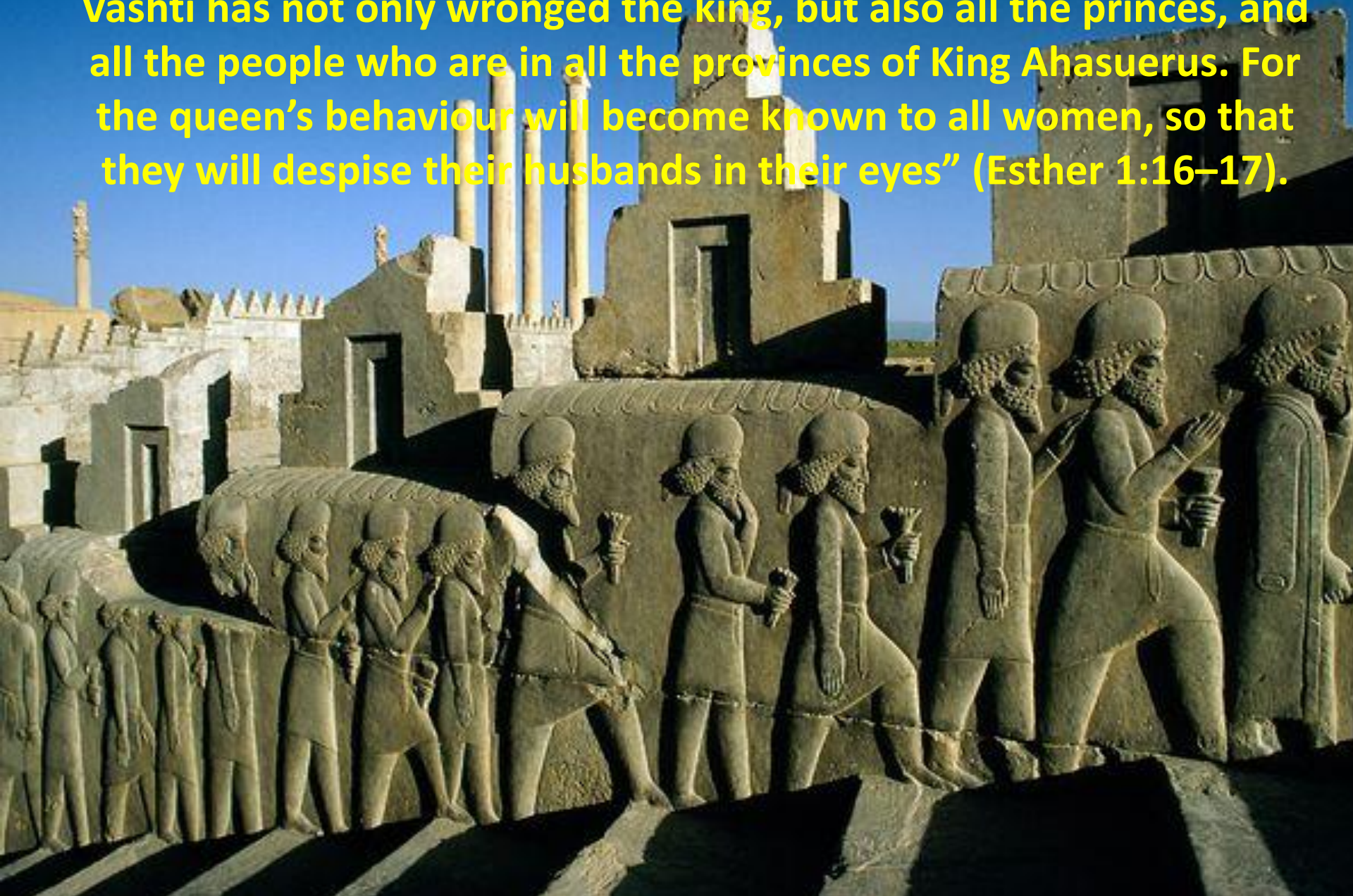


... the king was furious, and his anger burned within him. Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times ... (the seven princes of Persia and Media, who had access to the king's presence, and who ranked highest in the kingdom): **“What shall we do to Queen Vashti, according to law, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus** brought to her by the eunuchs?”

(Esther 1:12–15).



And Memucan answered before the king and the princes: “Queen Vashti has not only wronged the king, but also all the princes, and all the people who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus. For the queen’s behaviour will become known to all women, so that they will despise their husbands in their eyes” (Esther 1:16–17).





485

484

483

482

481

480

479

478



Esther 1:3-8

Year 7
Esther
2:16

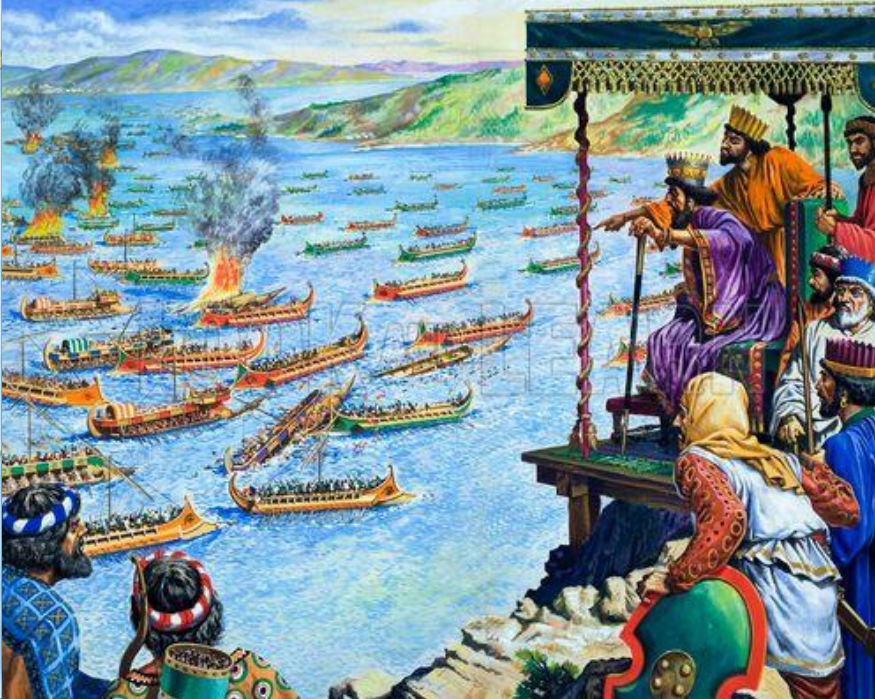
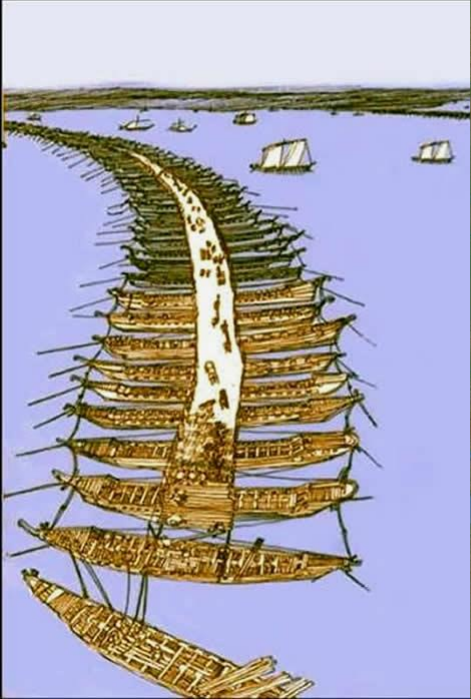




The Greek World during the Persian Wars (500-479 BC)

- ★ Ionian revolt
- ✕ Main battle
- Greek opponents of Persia
- Greek neutral states
- Persian empire
- Persian vassal states
- Ionian rebels (498 BC)
- Mardonius (492 BC)
- Artaphernes/Datis (490 BC)
- Xerxes/Mardonius (480 BC)

0 50 100 km



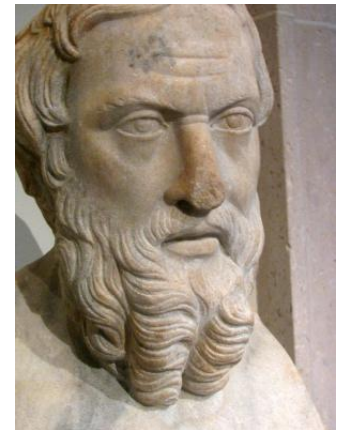


The Battle of Thermopylae 480 BC





Xerxes and Amestri
(Vashti)



Herodotus
9:109-112





Esther 1:3-8



After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, **he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her.** Then the king's servants who attended him said: "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king... (Esther 2:1–3).





Persian Beauty Contest!





Let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women's quarters, under the custody of Hegai the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given them... (Esther 2:3).





THRACE
MACEDONIA
GREECE
IONIA

Black Sea

CAUCASUS MTS.

Caspian Sea

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Euphrates R.

Tigris R.

HINDU KUSH

Indus R.

BABYLONIA

Susa

PERSIA

Persepolis

Persian Gulf

EGYPT

SAHARA

Nile R.

Red Sea

ARABIA

Arabian Sea

 Persian Empire, 500 B.C.E.
 Royal road

0 250 500 miles
0 250 500 kilometers



In Shushan the citadel there was a **certain Jew whose name was Mordecai** the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite. Kish had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

(Esther 2:5–6).

“Mordecai the Jew” (6 times)

Esther 5:13; 6:10; 8:7; 9:29, 31; 10:3



**Esther also was
taken to the king's
palace... (Esther 2:8).**

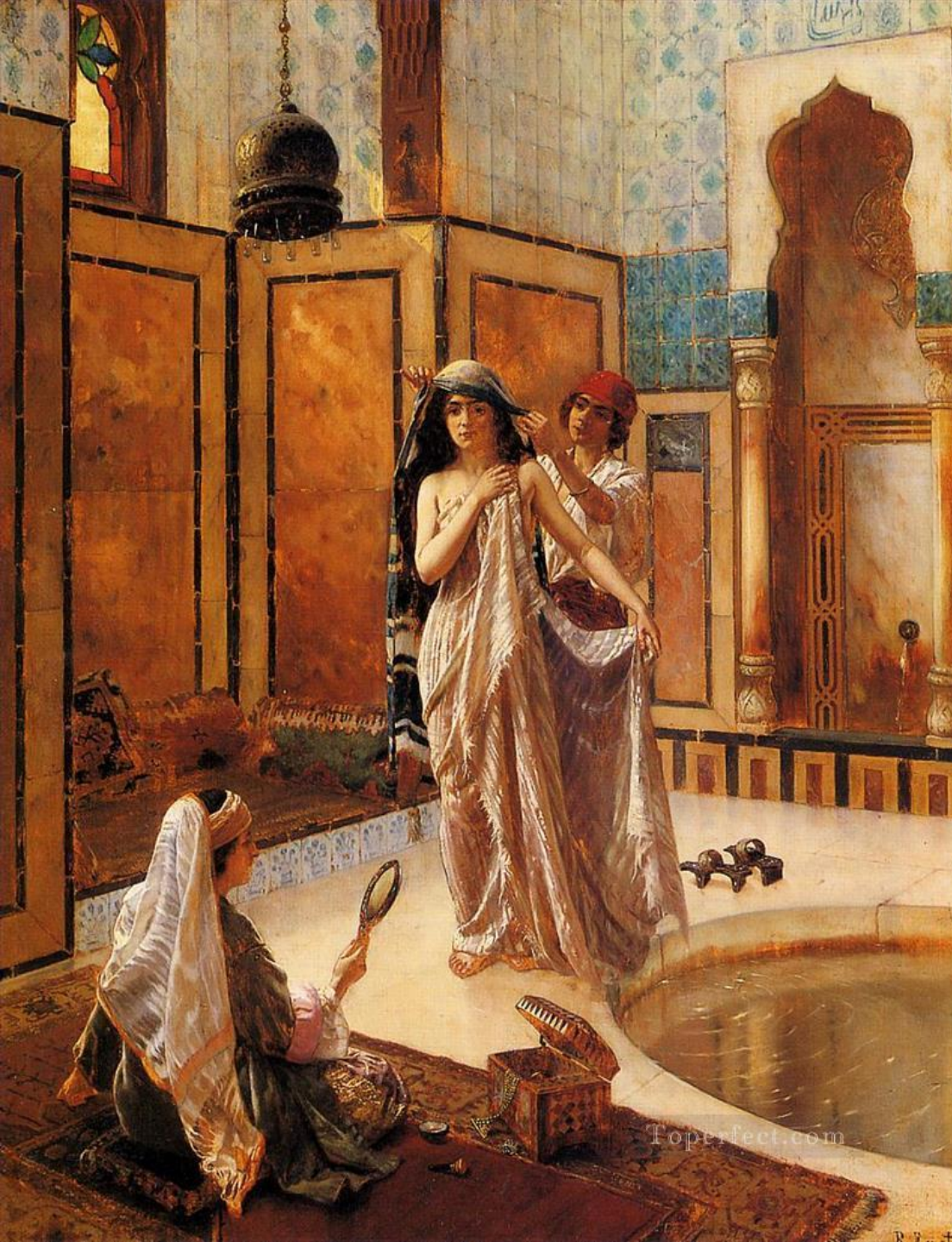
Esther 2:7-8



Esther also **was taken** to the king's palace, into the care of Hegai the custodian of the women. Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained his favour; so he readily gave beauty preparations to her, besides her allowance. Then seven choice maidservants were provided for her from the king's palace, and he moved her and her maidservants to the best place in the house of the women. Esther had not revealed her people or family, for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal it (Esther 2:8–10).



Esther = Ishtar
Hadassah = Hyrtle



Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women. Thus prepared, each young woman went to the king (Esther 2:12–13).





So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. **The king loved Esther more than all the other women**, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins...

(Esther 2:16–17).



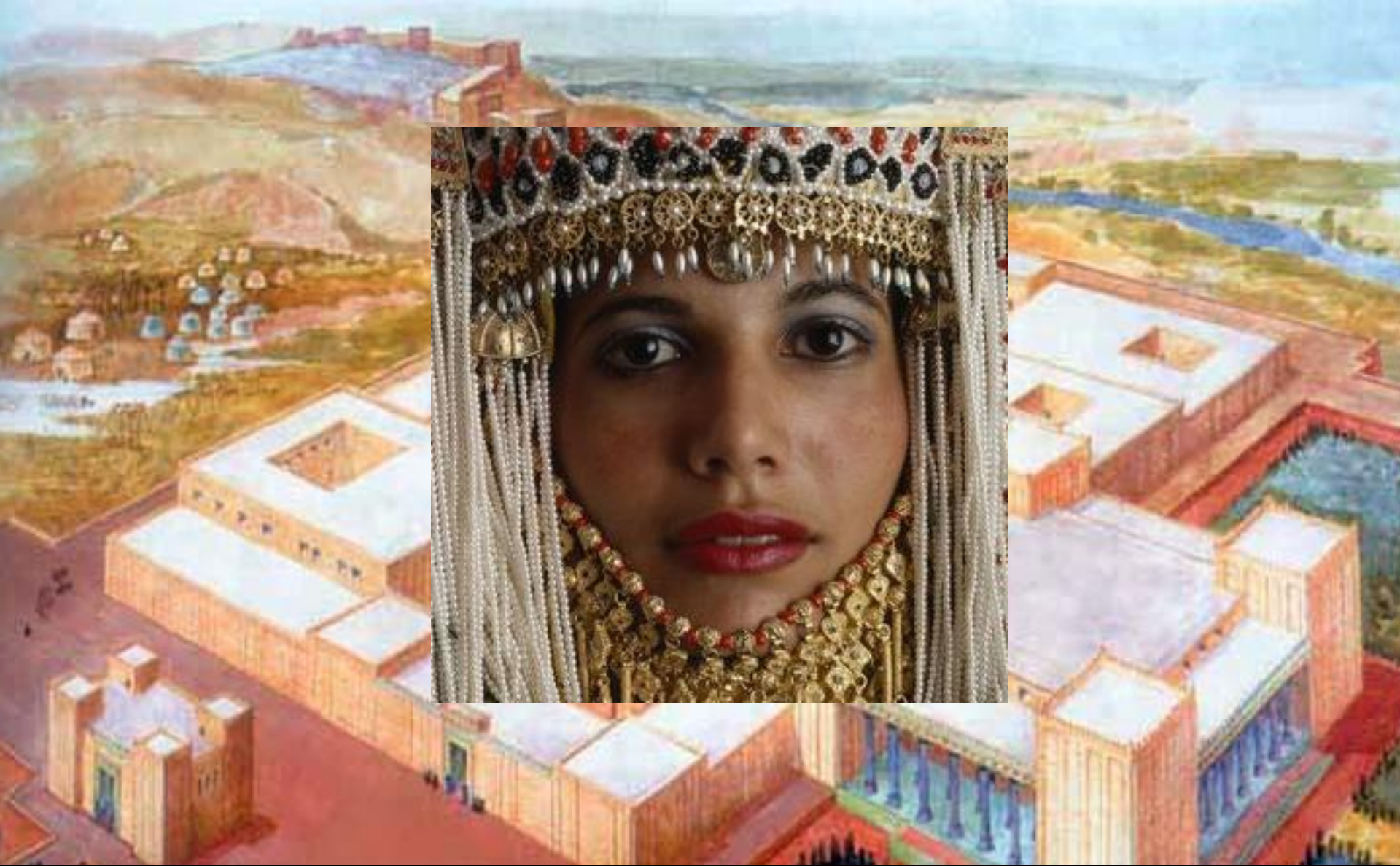


... so he set the royal crown upon her head and **made her queen instead of Vashti.**

Then the king made a great feast, the Feast of Esther, for all his officials and servants; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces and gave gifts according to the generosity of a king

(Esther 2:17–18).





When the king's decree which he will make is proclaimed throughout all his empire (for it is great), all wives will honour their husbands, both great and small." (Esther 1:20) – **The name of God: HWHY**

What have we learned?

1. The Bible is absolutely historically reliable. Never doubt it!
2. God lets some very strange people rule over men
3. He always has His people's welfare in mind
4. Sometimes the ways of God are beyond our understanding
5. When we are asked to do something we have to believe...
6. God always knows best
7. He is to be found in the most unlikely places!



Esther: An Unlikely Saviour

2. Haman the Jews' Enemy





So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

(Esther 2:16–17).





This is what happened during the time of **Xerxes**, the Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush: (Esther 1:1 NIV).





This is what happened during the time of **Xerxes**, the Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush: (Esther 1:1 NIV).





No. 557 Femmes de harem.



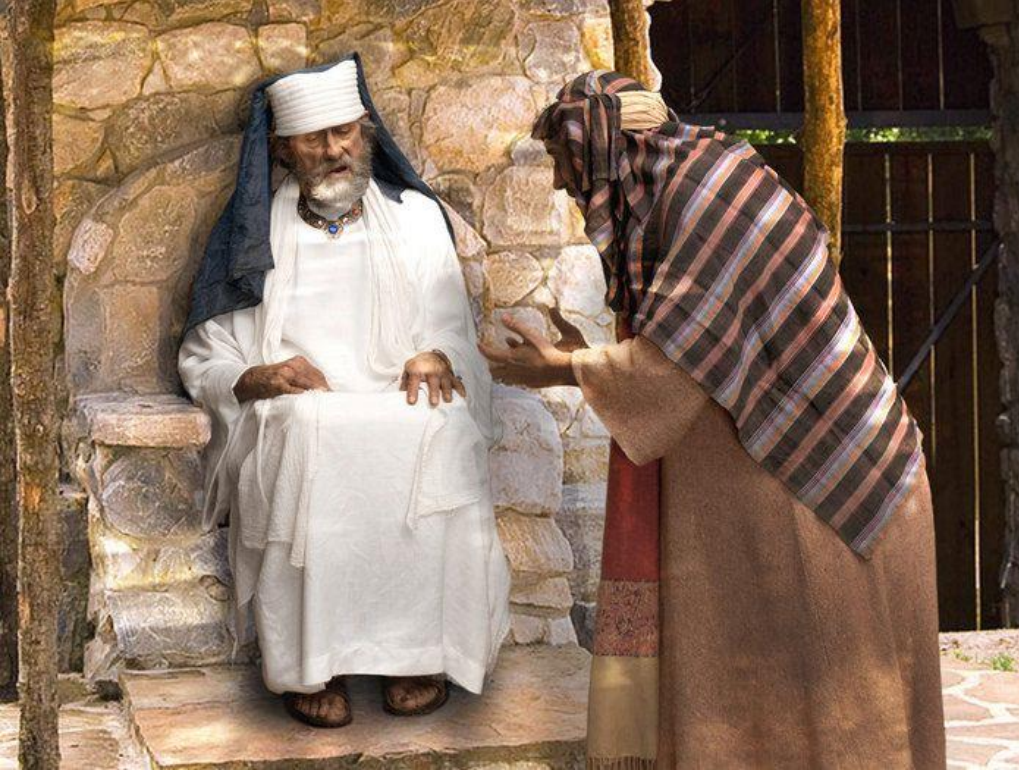
Esther = Ishtar (Star)

Hadassar = Myrtle (Neh 8:5; Zech 1:8-10; Isa 55:13)

Mordecai = Little man, bitter bruising



Leo Putnam



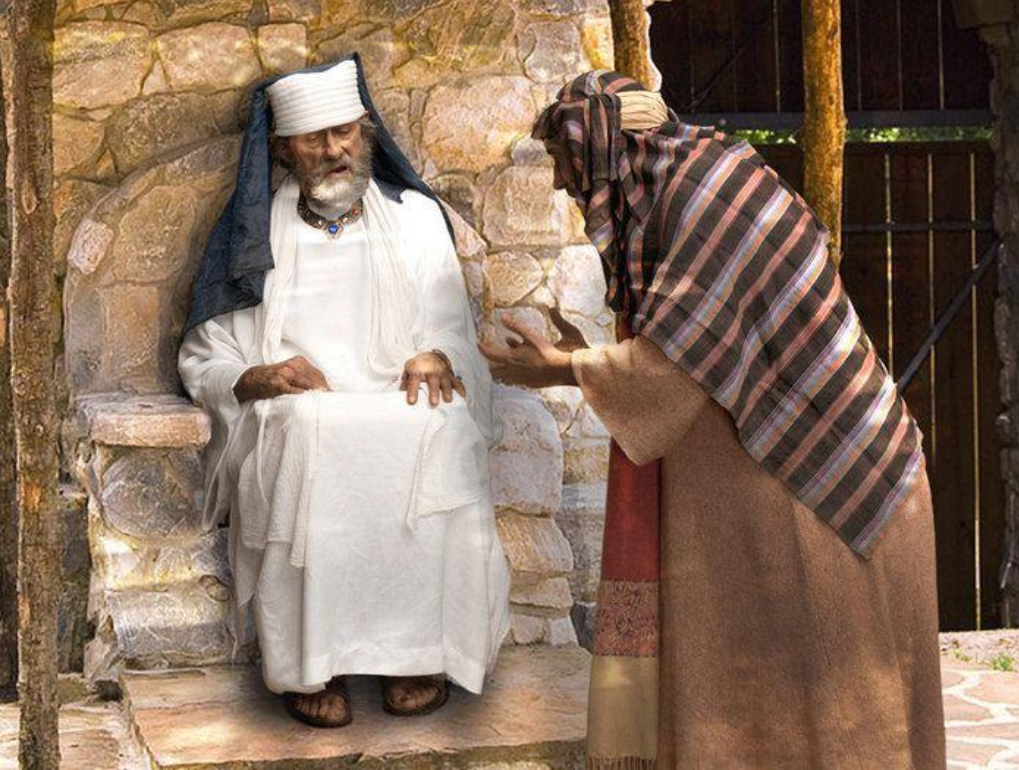
Esther had not revealed her people or family, for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal it. **And every day Mordecai paced in front of the court of the women's quarters, to learn of Esther's welfare and what was happening to her.**

(Esther 2:10–11).



Then the king said to Haman, “Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for **Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate!** Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken.” (Esther 6:10).





When virgins were gathered together a second time, **Mordecai sat within the king's gate** (Esther 2:19).







In those days, while **Mordecai sat within the king's gate**, two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, doorkeepers, became furious and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name. And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king. (Esther 2:21–23)





After these things King Ahasuerus promoted **Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite**, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him. (Esther 3:1)

Haman = Tumult; A Rioter; A Rager

Hammedatha = He who troubles the law.

- ❖ Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, **the enemy of the Jews**. (Esther 3:10);
- ❖ “The **adversary** and **enemy** is this wicked Haman!” (Esther 7:6);
- ❖ Haman, **the enemy of the Jews**. (8:1);
- ❖ Haman the son of Hammedatha, **the enemy of the Jews** (9:10);
- ❖ Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, **the enemy of all the Jews** (Esther 9:24).





After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha **the Agagite**, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him. (Esther 3:1)



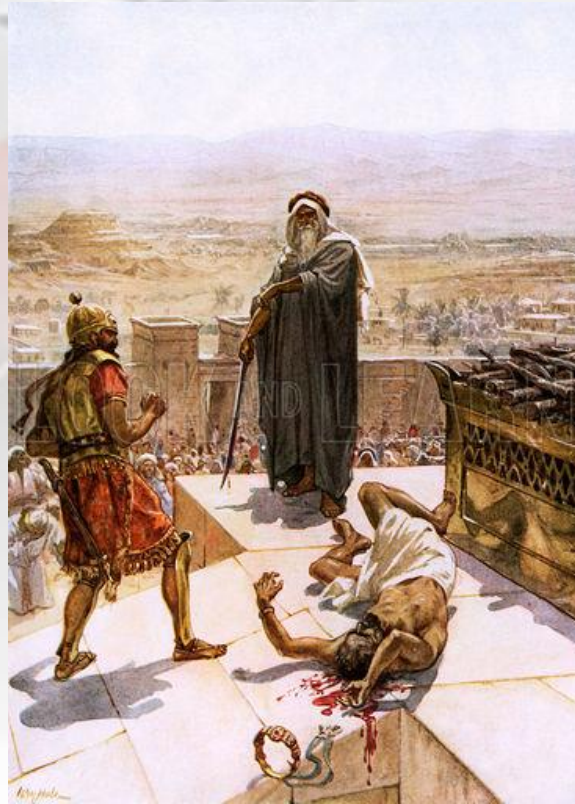
Exodus 17:8-16

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that **I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.**”
(Exodus 17:14)





After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha **the Agagite**, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him. (Esther 3:1)



Then Samuel said, “Bring **Agag king of the Amalekites** here to me.” So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.” But Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. (1 Samuel 15:32–33)





And all the king's servants who were within the king's gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. **But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage.** (Esther 3:2)

When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath. But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, **Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.** (Esther 3:5-6).





Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai. (Esther 3:6)





When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, **Haman was filled with wrath.** (Esther 3:5)





AGAG

HAMAN



In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, **they cast Pur (that is, the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month**, until it fell on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. (Esther 3:7).



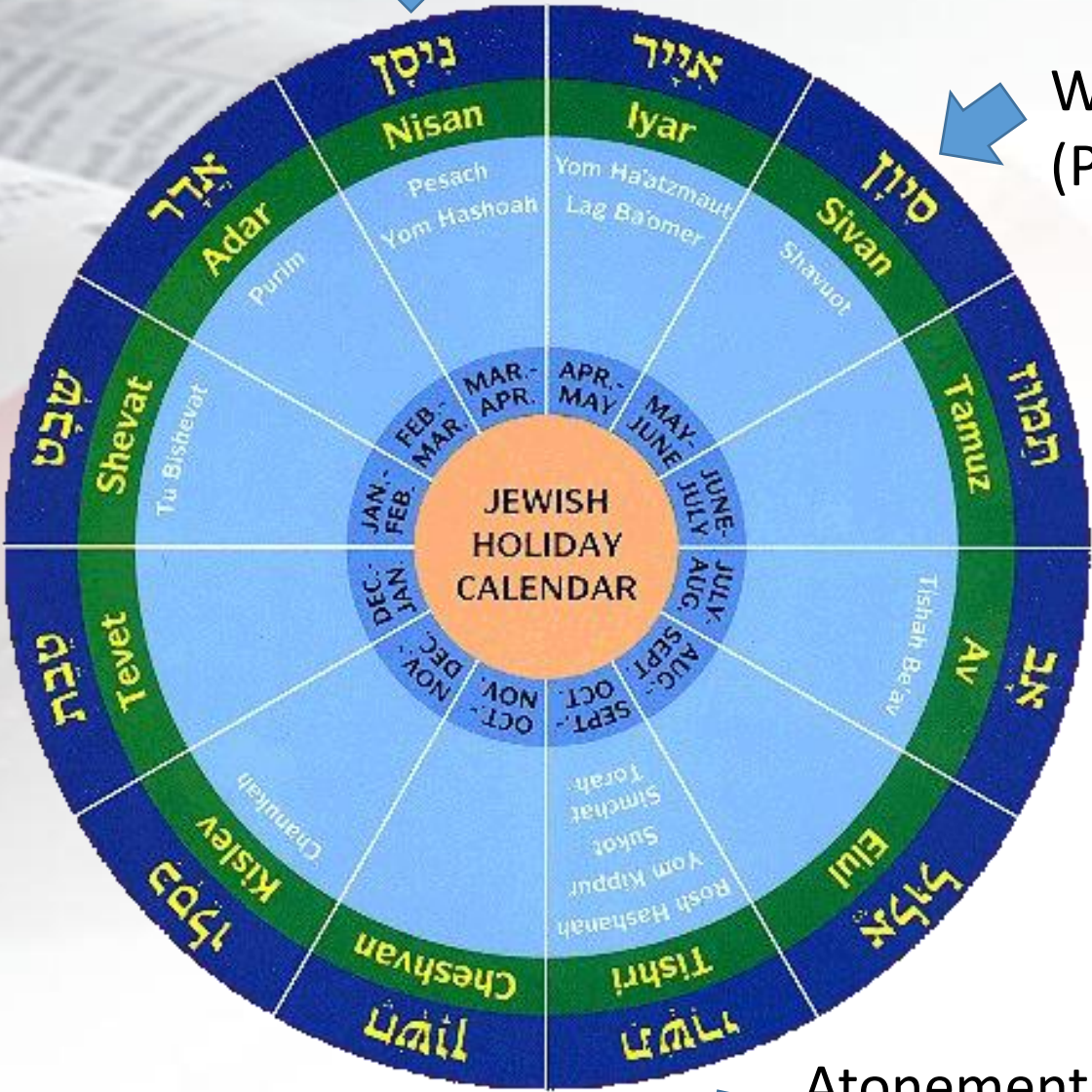
Passover



Weeks
(Pentecost)



Atonement & Tabernacles



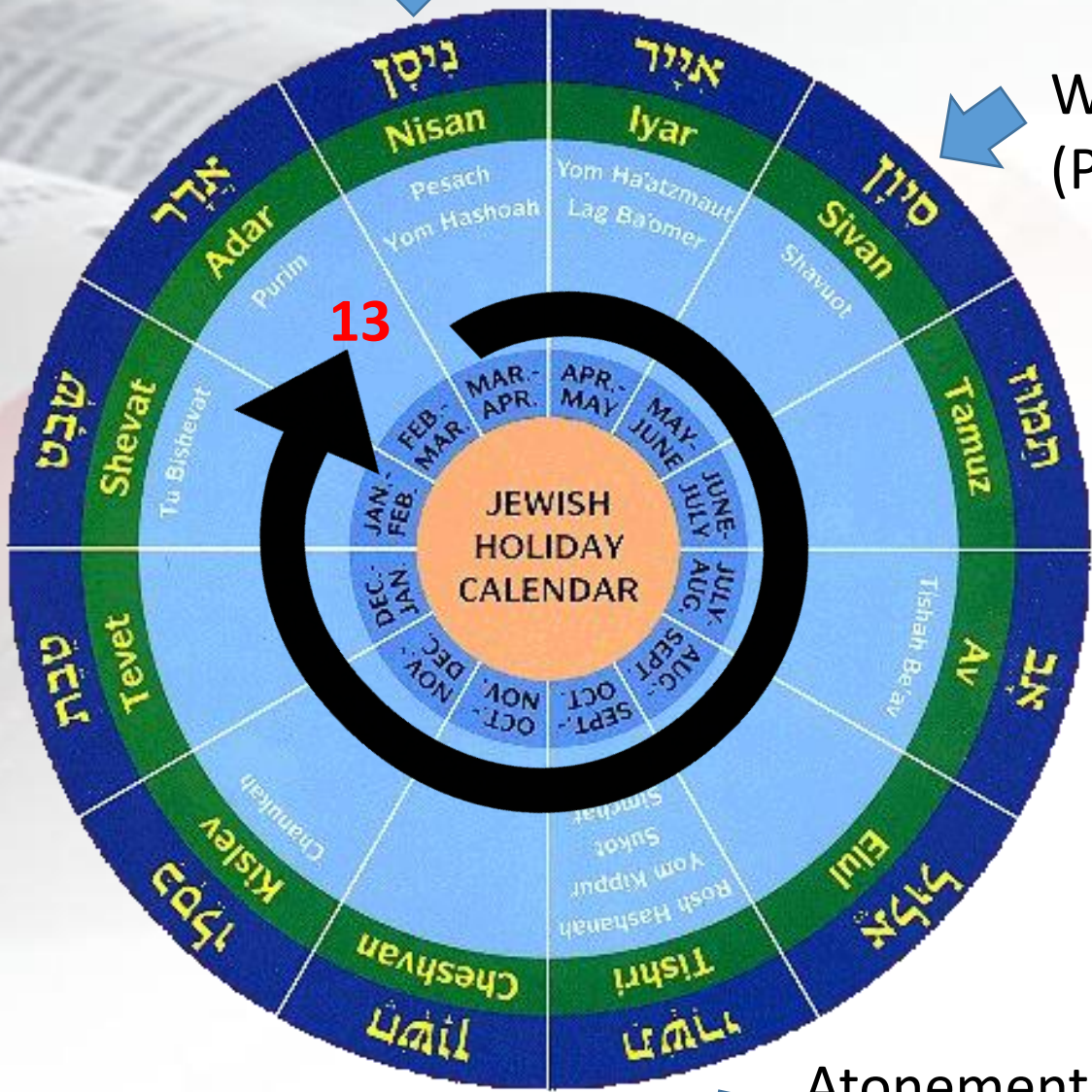
Passover



Weeks
(Pentecost)



Atonement & Tabernacles





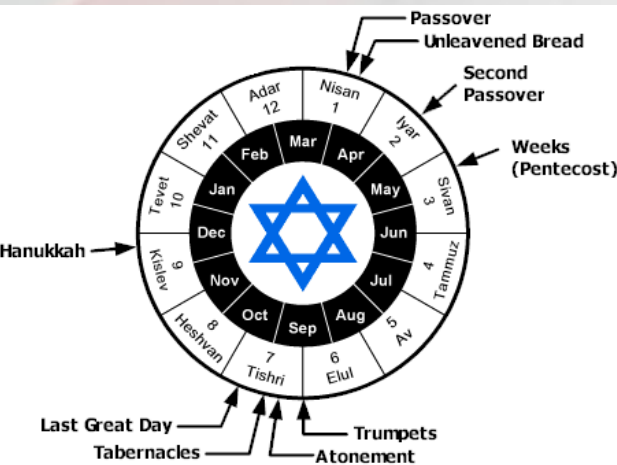
Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people’s, and they do not keep the king’s laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain. If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king’s treasuries.” **So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. And the king said to Haman, “The money and the people are given to you, to do with them as seems good to you.”** (Esther 3:8–11).





13th day of Nisan

Then the king'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 king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province, to the officials of all people, to every province according to its script, and to every people in their language. In the name of King Ahasuerus it was written, and sealed with the king's signet ring. **And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, 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. (Esther 3:12–13).





Ester 2:14-15






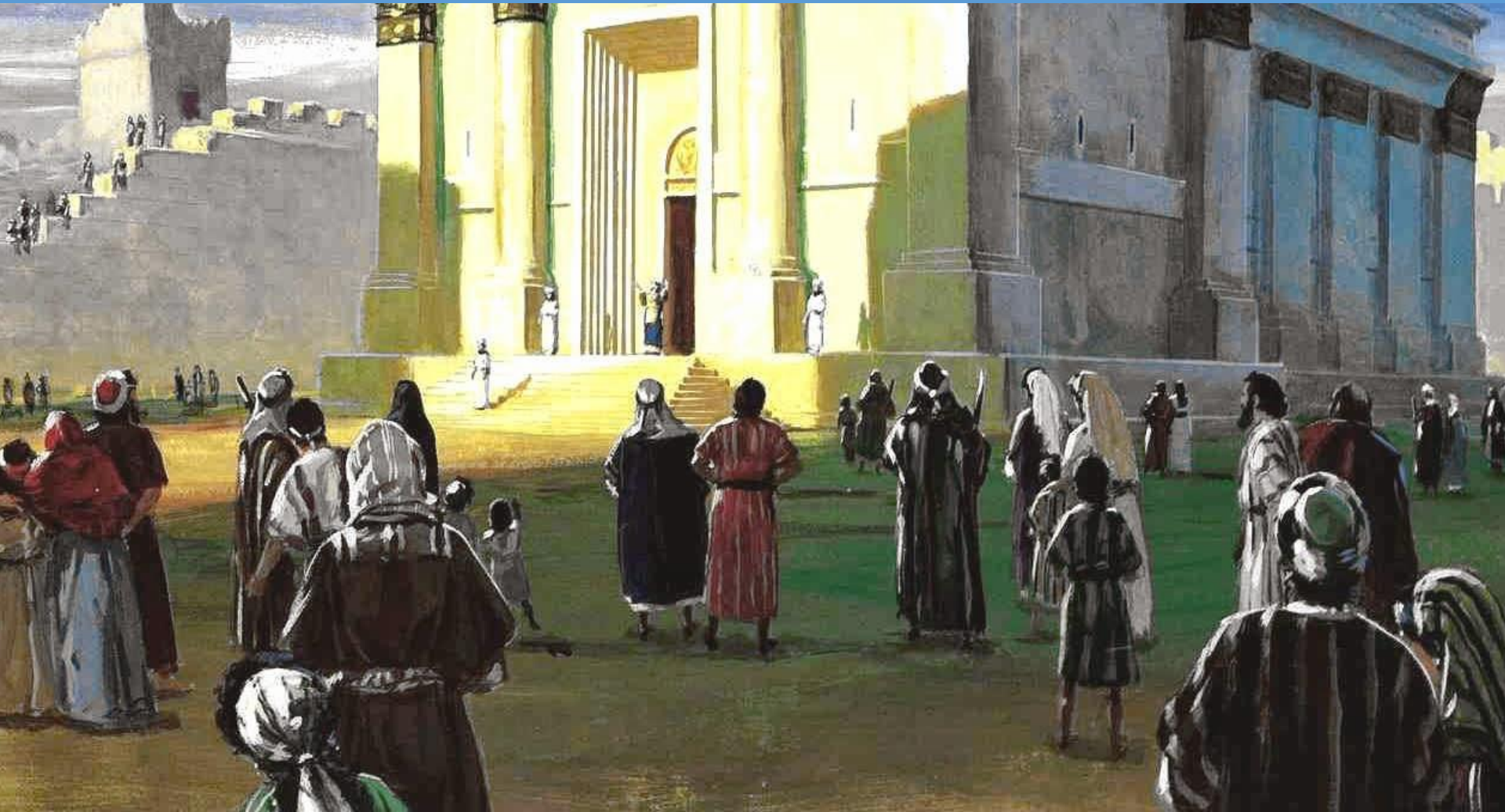
"NEITHER SNOW NOR RAIN NOR HEAT NOR GLOOM OF NIGHT STAYS THESE COURIERS FROM THE SWIFT COMPLETION OF THEIR APPOINTED ROUNDS" – James Farley Post Office, New York.

“Now there is nothing mortal that accomplishes a course more swiftly than do these messengers, by the Persians’ skilful contrivance. It is said that as many days as there are in the whole journey, so many are the men and horses that stand along the road, each horse and man at the interval of a day’s journey; and **these are stayed neither by snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness from accomplishing their appointed course with all speed.**” Herodotus (8:98)



Dates	Reigns	Date	Jewish Events
605-562 BC	Nebuchadnezzar (King of Babylon)	586	Jerusalem destroyed Remaining Jews taken to Babylon
Jewish Exile			
539-530	Cyrus (King of Persia)	539	Fall of Babylon
530-522	Cambyses		
521-486	Darius 1, Hystaspes	516	Temple building completed
474 (12 th year of Xerxes) (Esther 3:7)	Decree issued <i>“to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women ... and to plunder their possessions.”</i> (Esther 3:13).		
486-464	Xerxes (Ahasuerus)		
464-423	Artaxerxes 1 (Longimanus)	458 445	Ezra to Jerusalem Nehemiah to Jerusalem

And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to **destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, 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.** (Esther 3:13).





When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. (Esther 4:1–2).

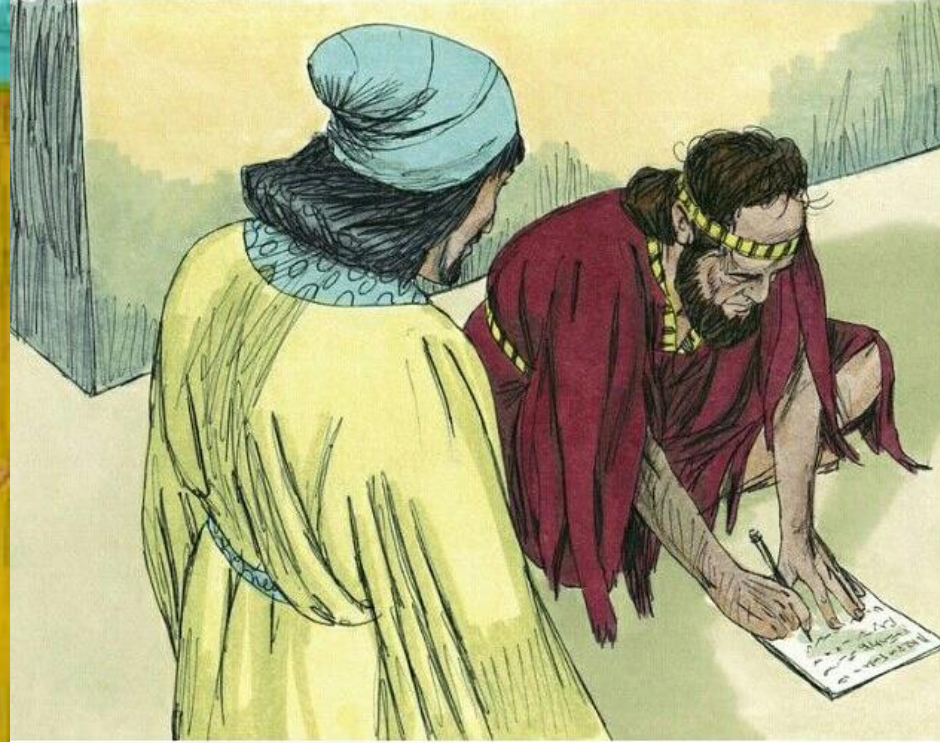
THE
POWER OF
PRAYER AND
FASTING





And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. So Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept them. Then Esther called Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this was. (Esther 4:3–6)

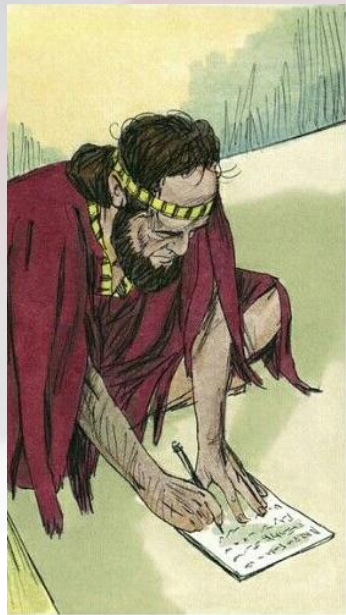




And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews. He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people. (Esther 4:7–8)



“All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden sceptre, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days.” (Esther 4:11).



And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: “Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews. **For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place**, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom **for such a time as this?**” (Esther 4:13–14)



“Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so **I will go to the king**, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!” So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him. (Esther 4:16–17).



THE
POWER OF
PRAYER AND
FASTING



What have we learned?

1. God controls the emotions, feelings and thinking of key players in His purpose (including Xerxes!)
2. Esther had been placed in a difficult position, married to a very dangerous man of very uncertain temper
3. Some things that seem unimportant at the time can turn out to be very important indeed in the purpose of God
4. The hatred that existed between nations in Bible times can turn out to be just as venomous in the 21st century
5. What happens far away geographically can have a very serious impact wherever we live in the world
6. When we are up against it, it is better to pray than to fast, although we could do both!



Esther: An Unlikely Saviour

3. Esther's Courage





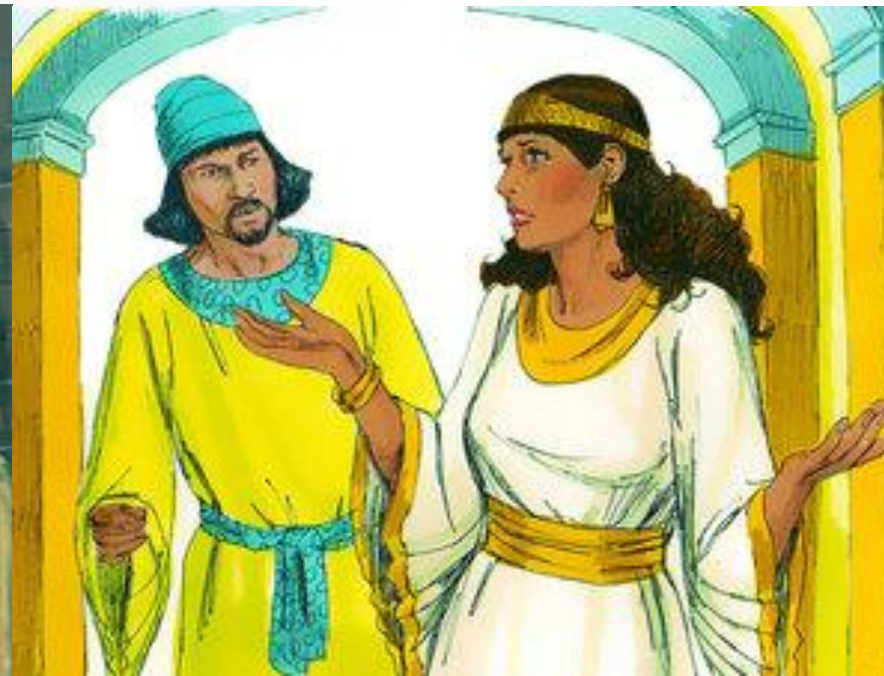
Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people’s, and they do not keep the king’s laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain. If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king’s treasuries.” **So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. And the king said to Haman, “The money and the people are given to you, to do with them as seems good to you.”** (Esther 3:8–11).

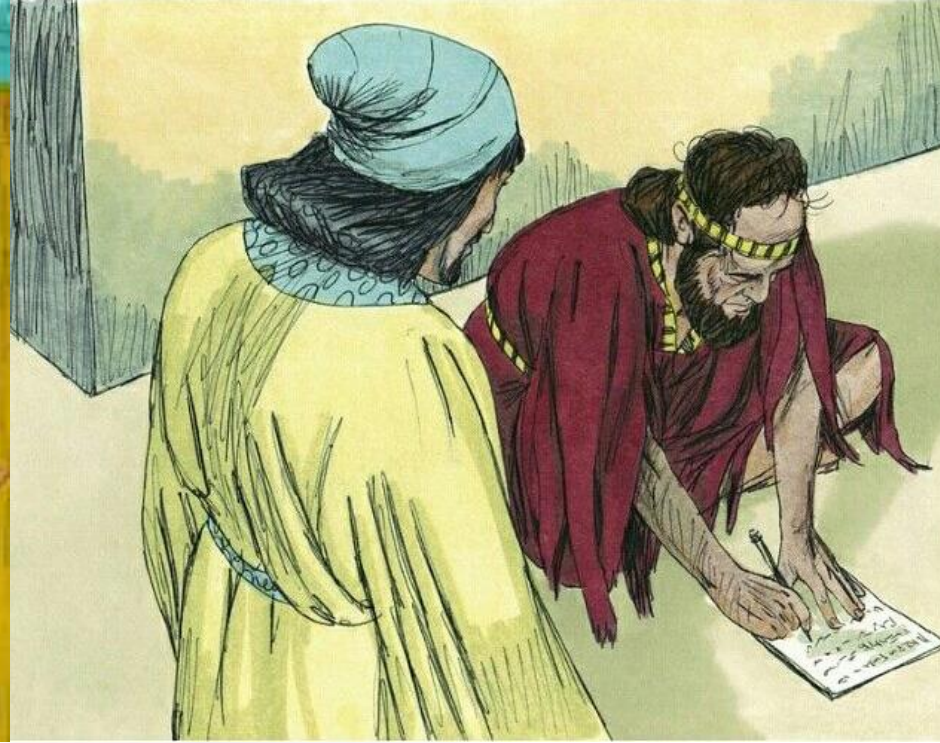
**DEATH TO
ALL THE
JEWS
WHEREVER
THEY LIVED**





When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. (Esther 4:1–2).

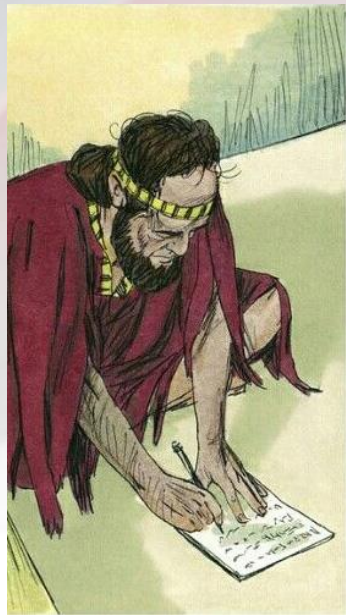




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Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: “Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I **will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!**” So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.

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(Esther 4:11).**



Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house. So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favour in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the sceptre. (Esther 5:1–2).





So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favour in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the sceptre. (Esther 5:1–2).





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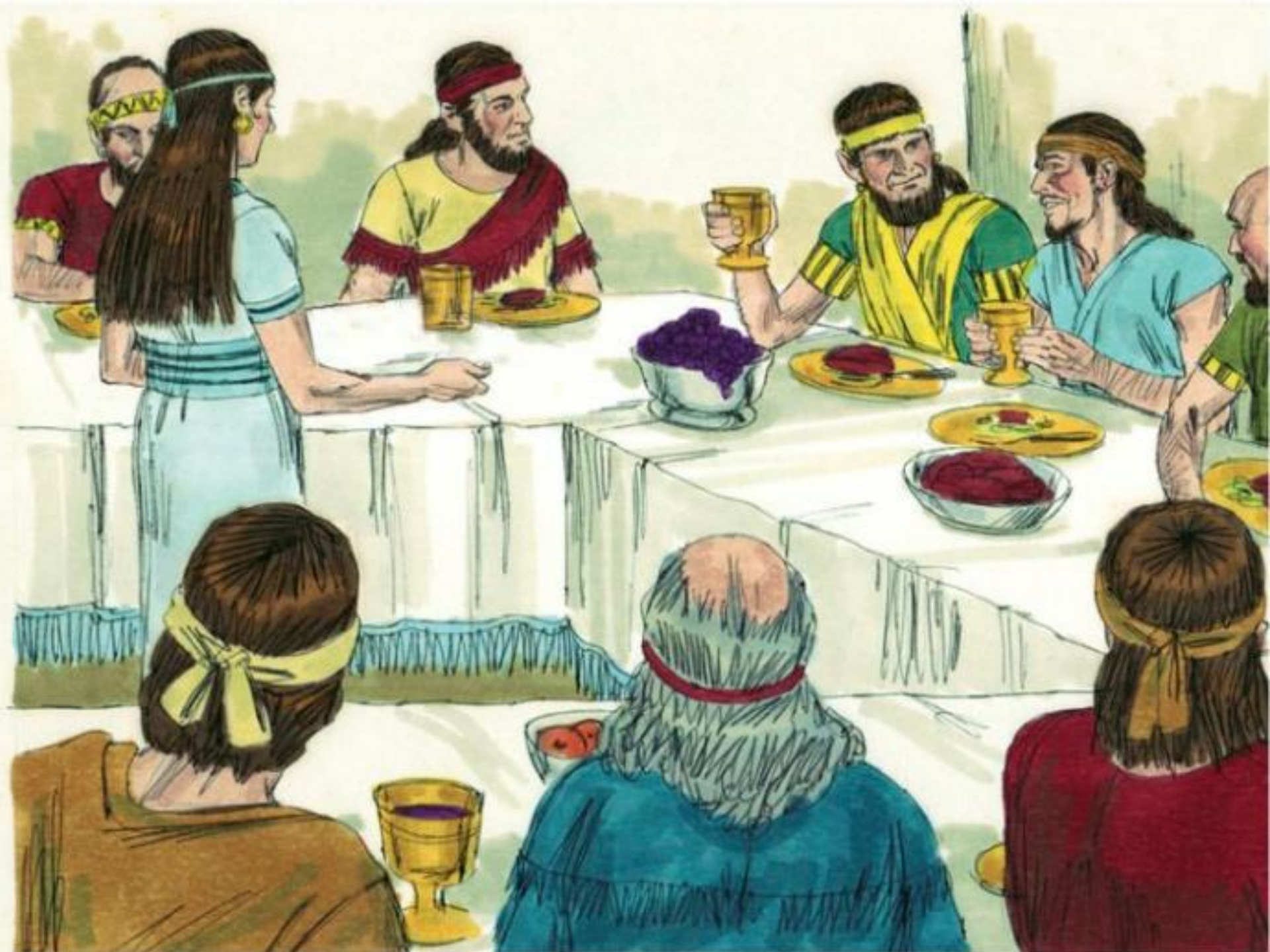


And the king said to her, “What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!” So Esther answered, **“If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him.”** (Esther 5:3–4) 2





Then Esther answered and said, “My petition and request is this: If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfil my request, then **let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said.**” (Esther 5:7–8).





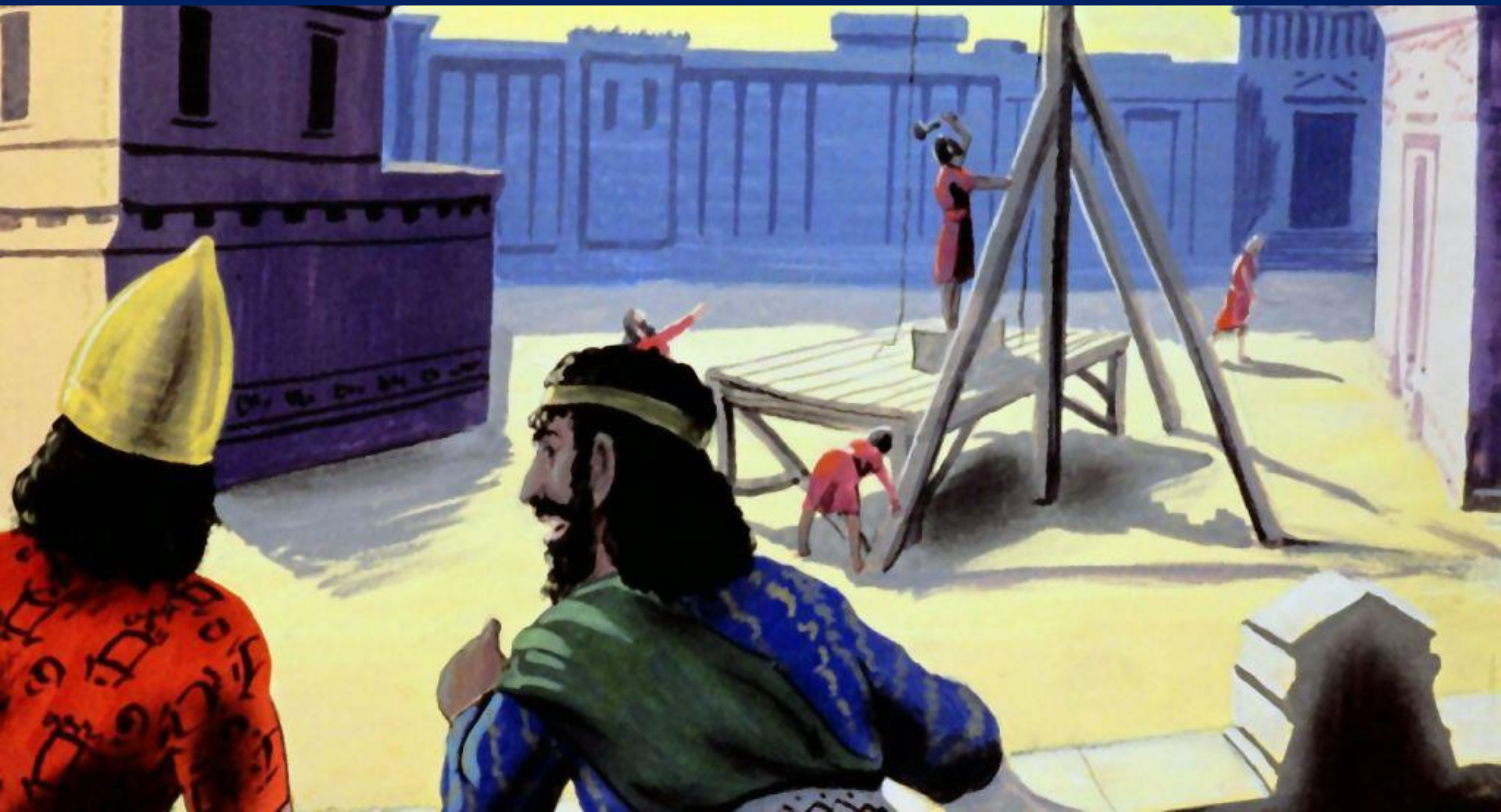
Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." (Esther 5:13)

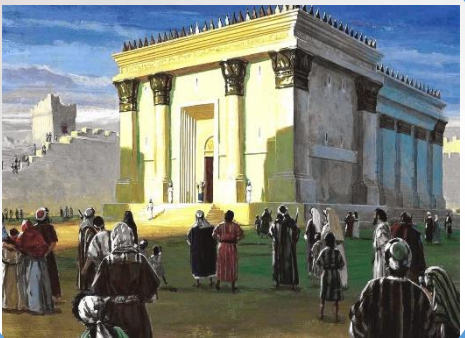
3

Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet." And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made. (Esther 5:13–14).

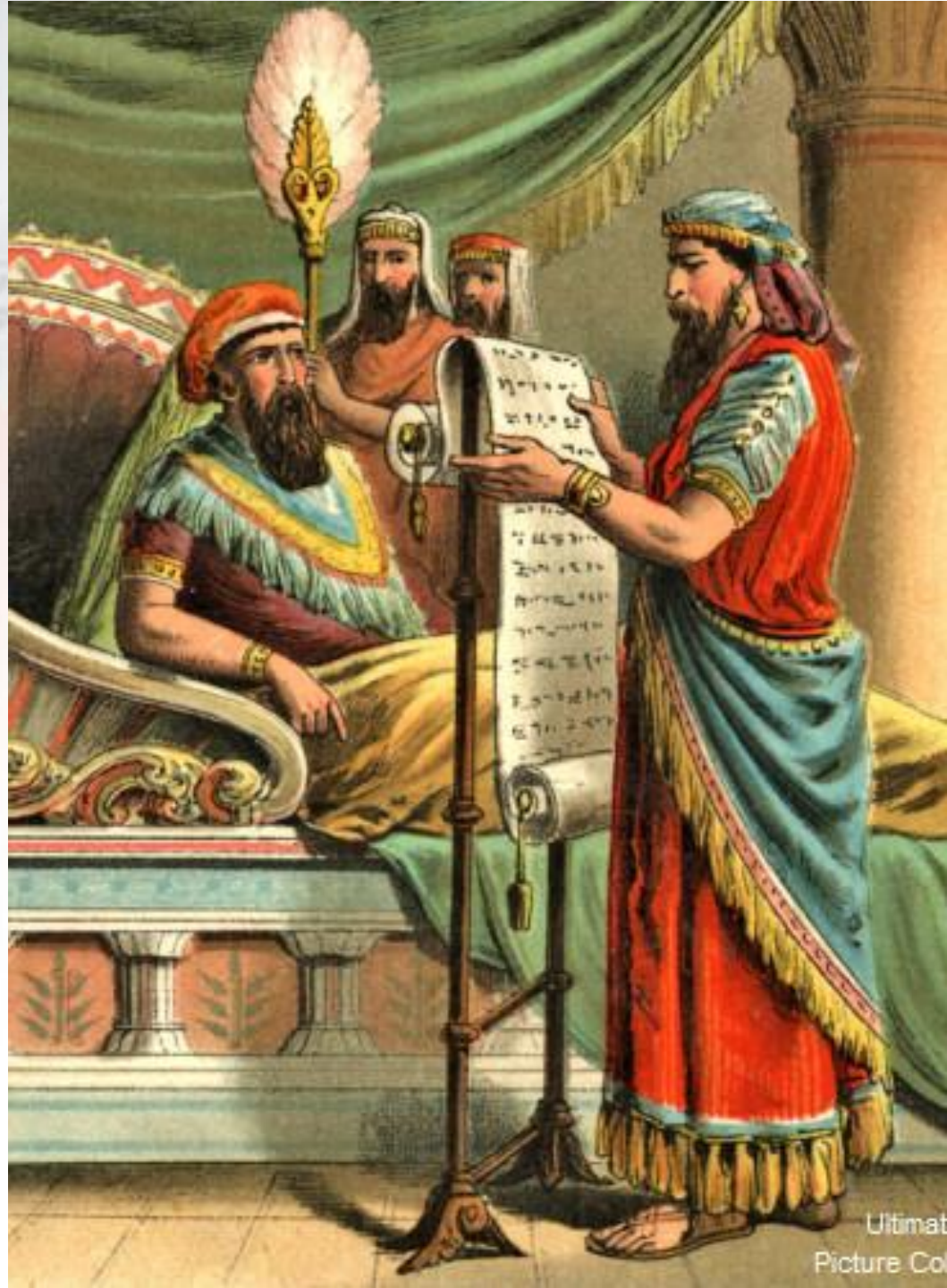


Behold, the wicked brings forth iniquity; Yes, he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood. He made a pit and dug it out, and has fallen into the ditch which he made. His trouble shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown.
(Psalm 7:14–16).



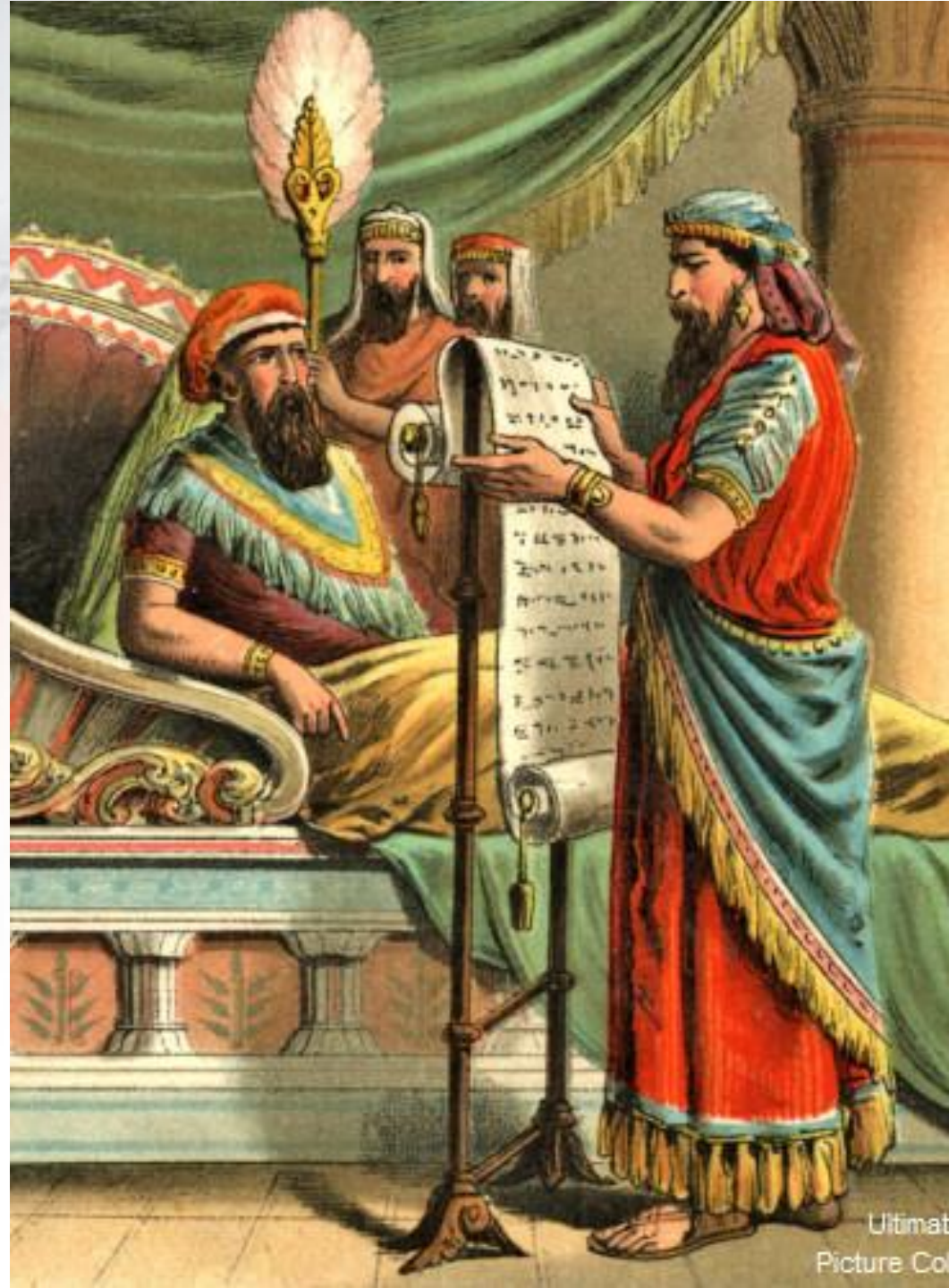


That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. Then the king said, "What honour or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him." (Esther 6:1-3).





So the king said, “Who is in the court?” Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king’s palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. The king’s servants said to him, “Haman is there, standing in the court.” And the king said, “Let him come in.” (Esther 6:4–5)





So Haman came in, and the king asked him, **“What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honour?”** Now Haman thought in his heart, **“Whom would the king delight to honour more than me?”**

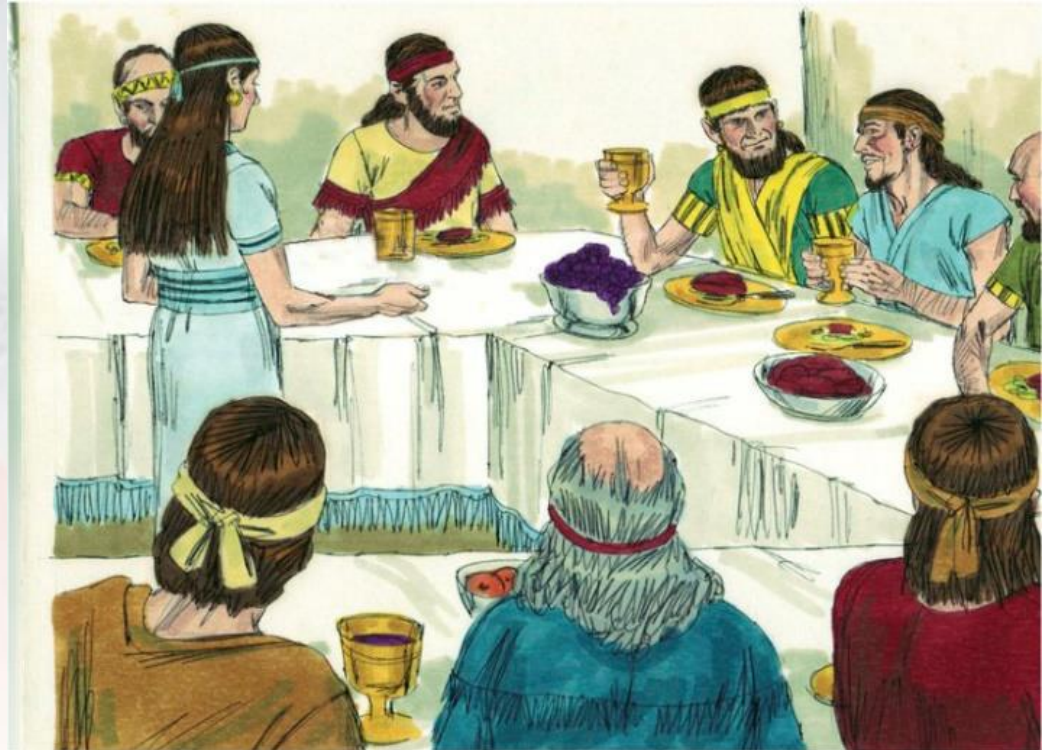
And Haman answered the king, “For the man whom the king delights to honour, let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head. Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honour. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: ‘Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honour!’ ” (Esther 6:6–9).





Then the king said to Haman, “Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king’s gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken.” So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!” (Esther 6:10–11).

Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered. When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, **“If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him.”** While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared. (Esther 6:12–14).





And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, “What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!” Then Queen Esther answered and said, “**If I have found favour in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. (Esther 7:2–3).**”

So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?” And Esther said, “**The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!**” So Haman was terrified before the king and queen. (Esther 7:5–6).



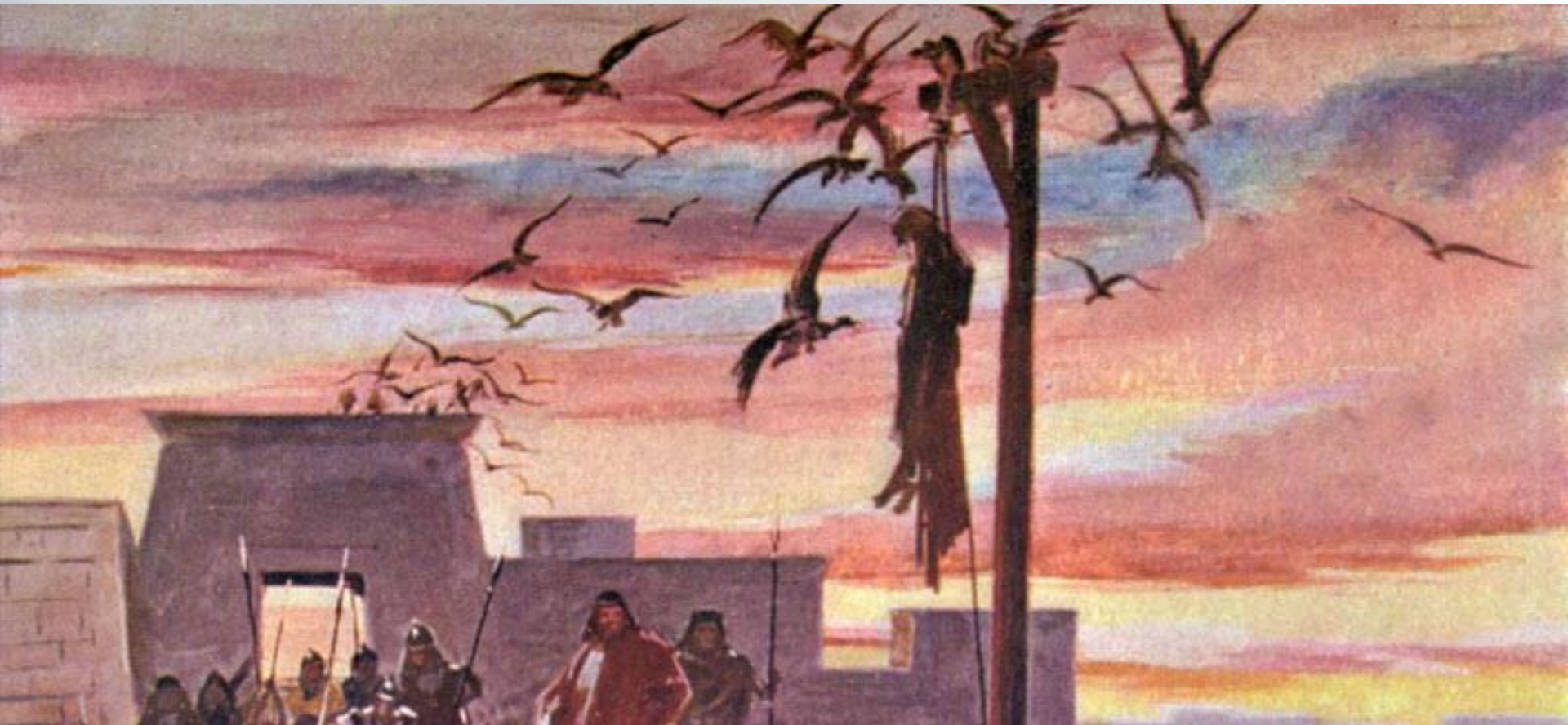


Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for **he saw that evil was determined against him by the king.** When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, “Will he also assault the queen while I am in the house?” As the word left the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face.

4

(Esther 7:7–8)





Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, “Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king’s behalf, is standing at the house of Haman.” Then the king said, “Hang him on it!” So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king’s wrath subsided.

(Esther 7:9–10)

The Four (Hidden) names of God

Reference: Esther	Speaker	Wording	Forwards or Backwards?
1:20	Memucan	"... all the wives shall give"	B
5:4	Esther	"Let the king and Haman come this day"	F
5:13	Haman	"this availeth me nothing"	B
7:7	Narrator	"there was evil determined against him"	F
7:5	Ahasuerus	"Who is he and where is he..." EHYH	

- ❖ E W Bullinger's "Companion Bible": Appendix 60
- ❖ Bro Roy Standeven: "The Fascination of Esther"
- ❖ Bro John Knowles: "Esther – Queen of Faith and Destiny"



Why are the four/five names of God hidden?

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When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. (Isaiah 1:15)

Bind up the testimony, Seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait on the LORD, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; and I will hope in Him. (8:16–17)



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And the LORD said to Moses: "Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and **I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured.**" (Deuteronomy 31:16–17)



What have we learned?

1. When His people are in trouble, God has an answer
2. He does not always work in the way we might expect
3. We have to do our part when opportunities are presented
4. Sometimes it takes real courage
5. Amazingly, we have easy access to the King of Kings, in prayer. (What a contrast with Esther and Xerxes!)
6. God has wonderful ways of achieving what He wants
7. If we are alert to events, we can be much encouraged (as was Esther by what happened to Mordecai)
8. We might have to bide our time and await a favourable opportunity (as did Esther)
9. If we wait on God, it will all turn out well (Romans 8:28).



Esther: An Unlikely Saviour

4. Mordecai made Prime Minister





For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king's loss." (Esther 7:4).

So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?” And Esther said, **“The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!”** So Haman was terrified before the king and queen. (Esther 7:5–6).



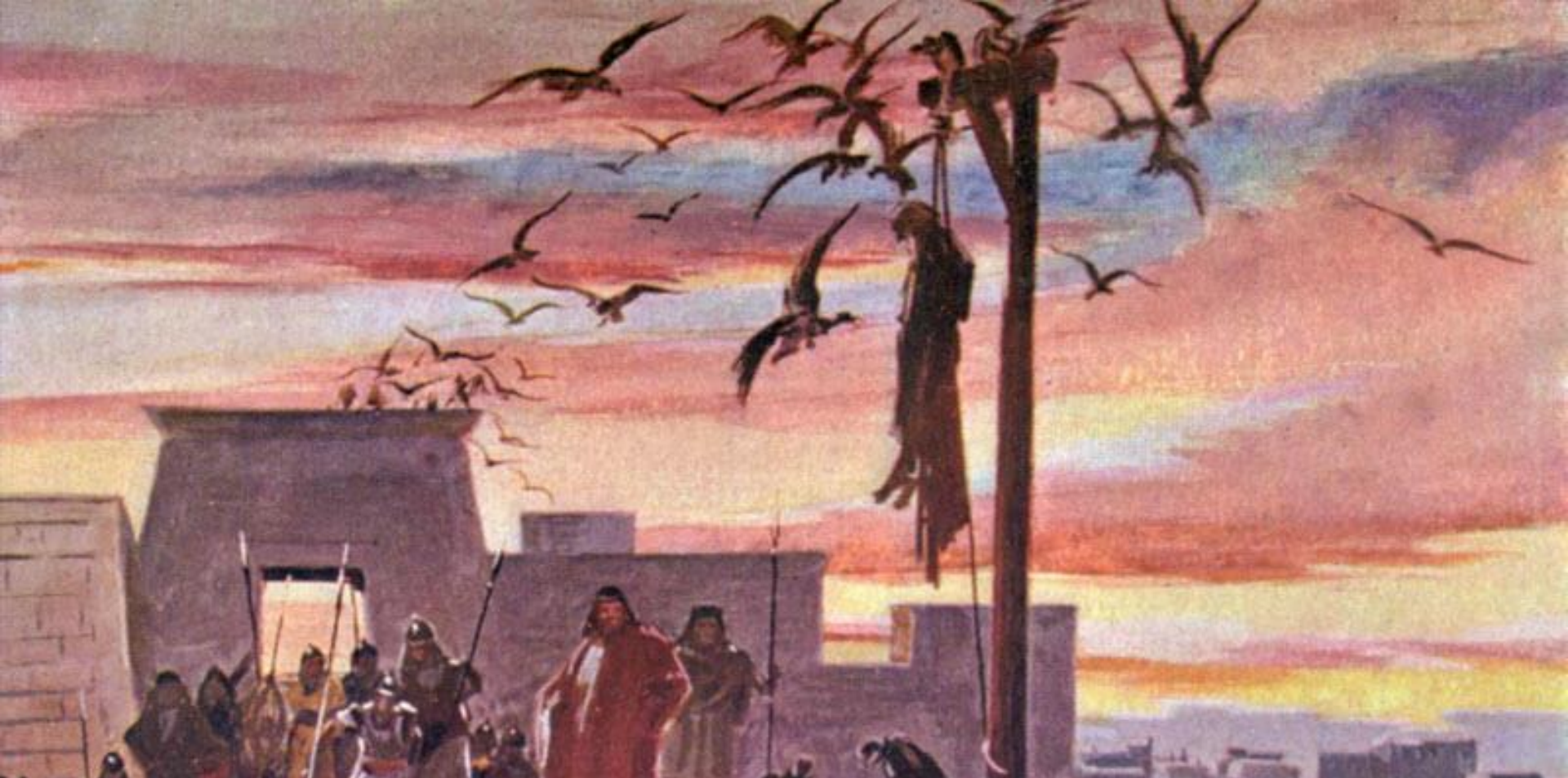


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In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, **they cast Pur (that is, the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month**, until it fell on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. (Esther 3:7).



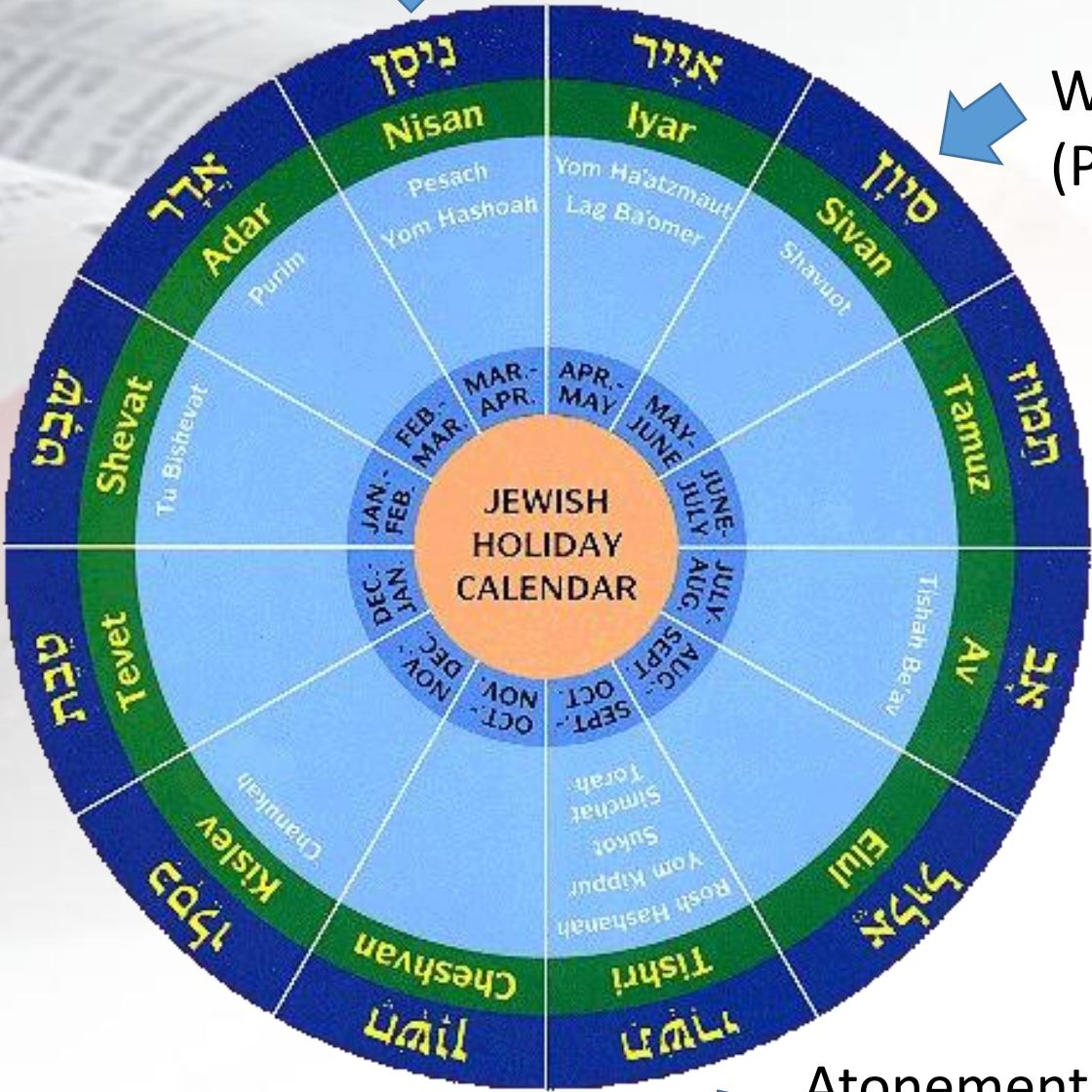
Passover



Weeks
(Pentecost)



Atonement & Tabernacles



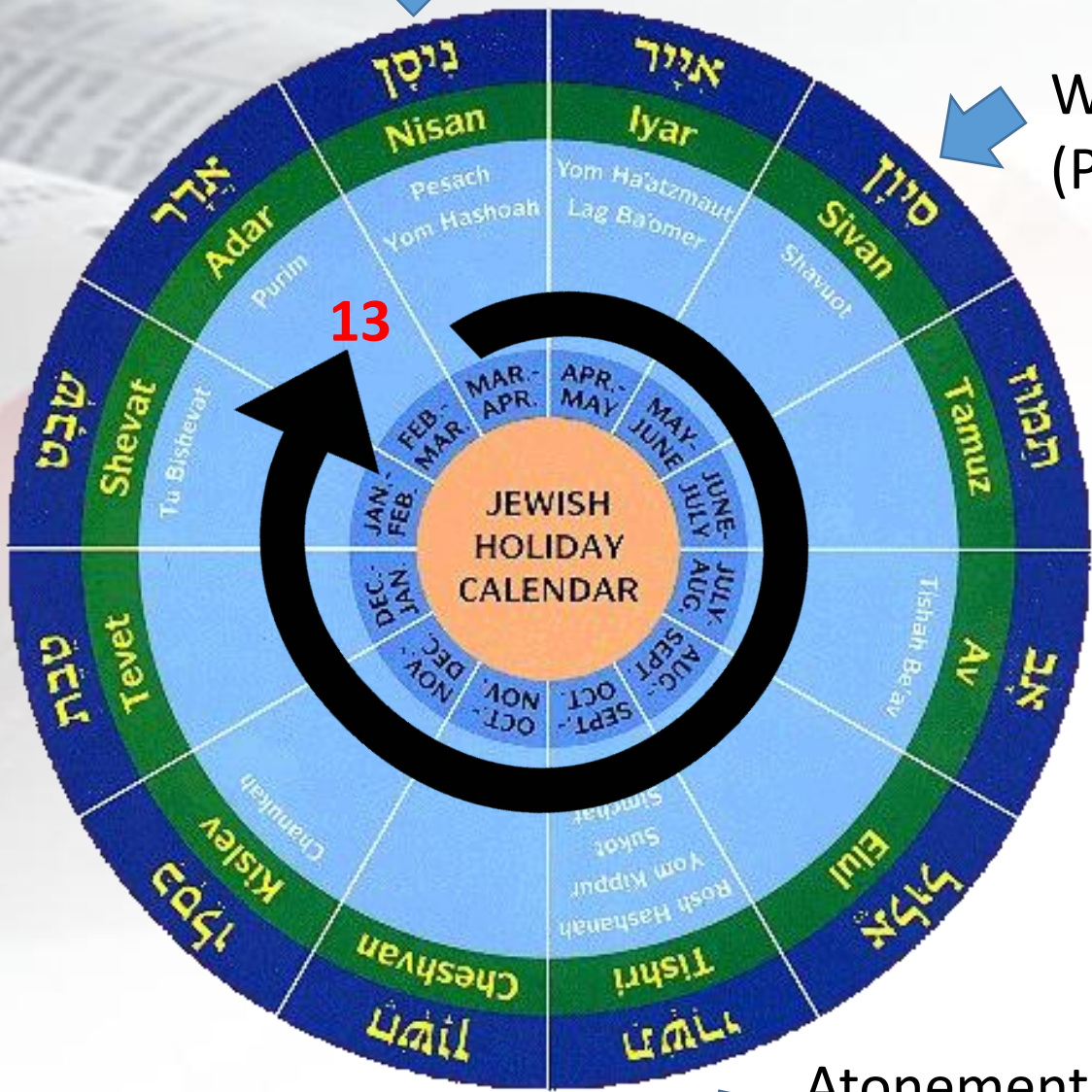
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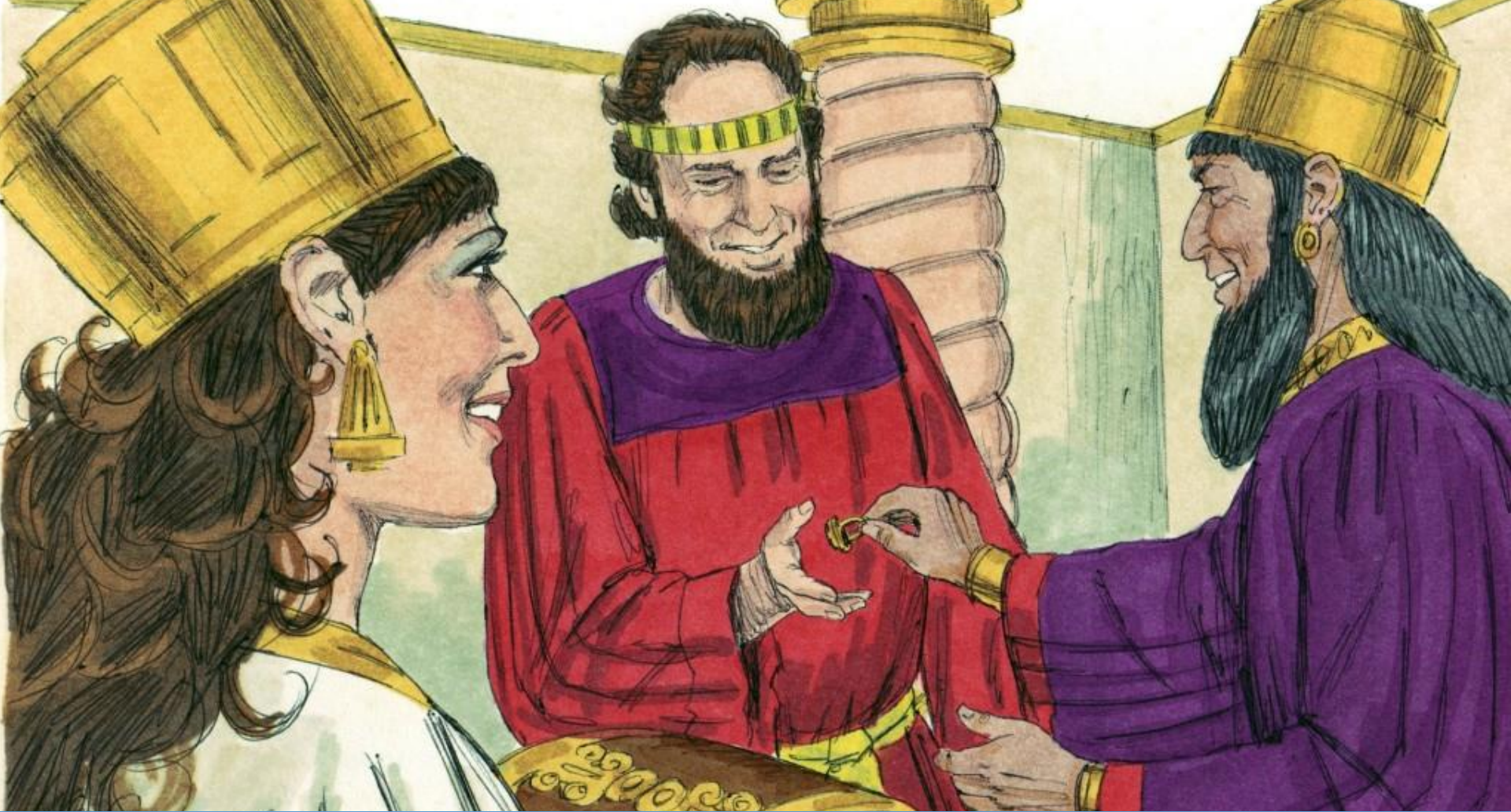




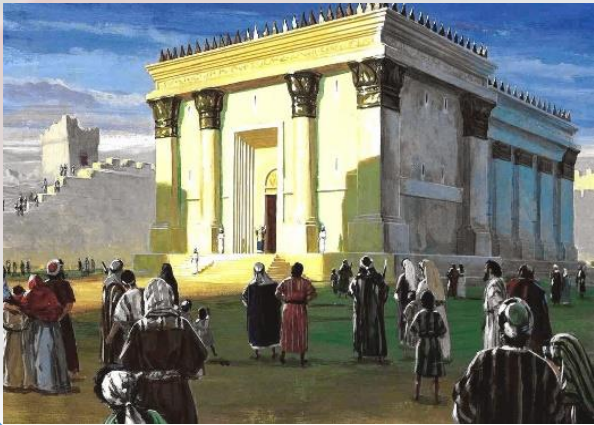
Esther 2:14-15



Dates	Reigns	Date	Jewish Events
605-562 BC	Nebuchadnezzar (King of Babylon)	586	Jerusalem destroyed Remaining Jews taken to Babylon
Jewish Exile			
539-530	Cyrus (King of Persia)	539	Fall of Babylon
530-522	Cambyses		
521-486	Darius 1, Hystaspes	516	Temple building completed
474 (12 th year of Xerxes) (Esther 3:7)	Decree issued <i>“to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women ... and to plunder their possessions.”</i> (Esther 3:13).		
486-464	Xerxes (Ahasuerus)		
464-423	Artaxerxes 1 (Longimanus)	458 445	Ezra to Jerusalem Nehemiah to Jerusalem



On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her. So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman. (Esther 8:1–2).





Esther 8:3-8





You yourselves write a decree concerning the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; **for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke.**"

(Esther 8:8).



So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you."
(Daniel 6:16).





So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in all, to every province in its own script, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language.

And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds. (Esther 8:9–10)





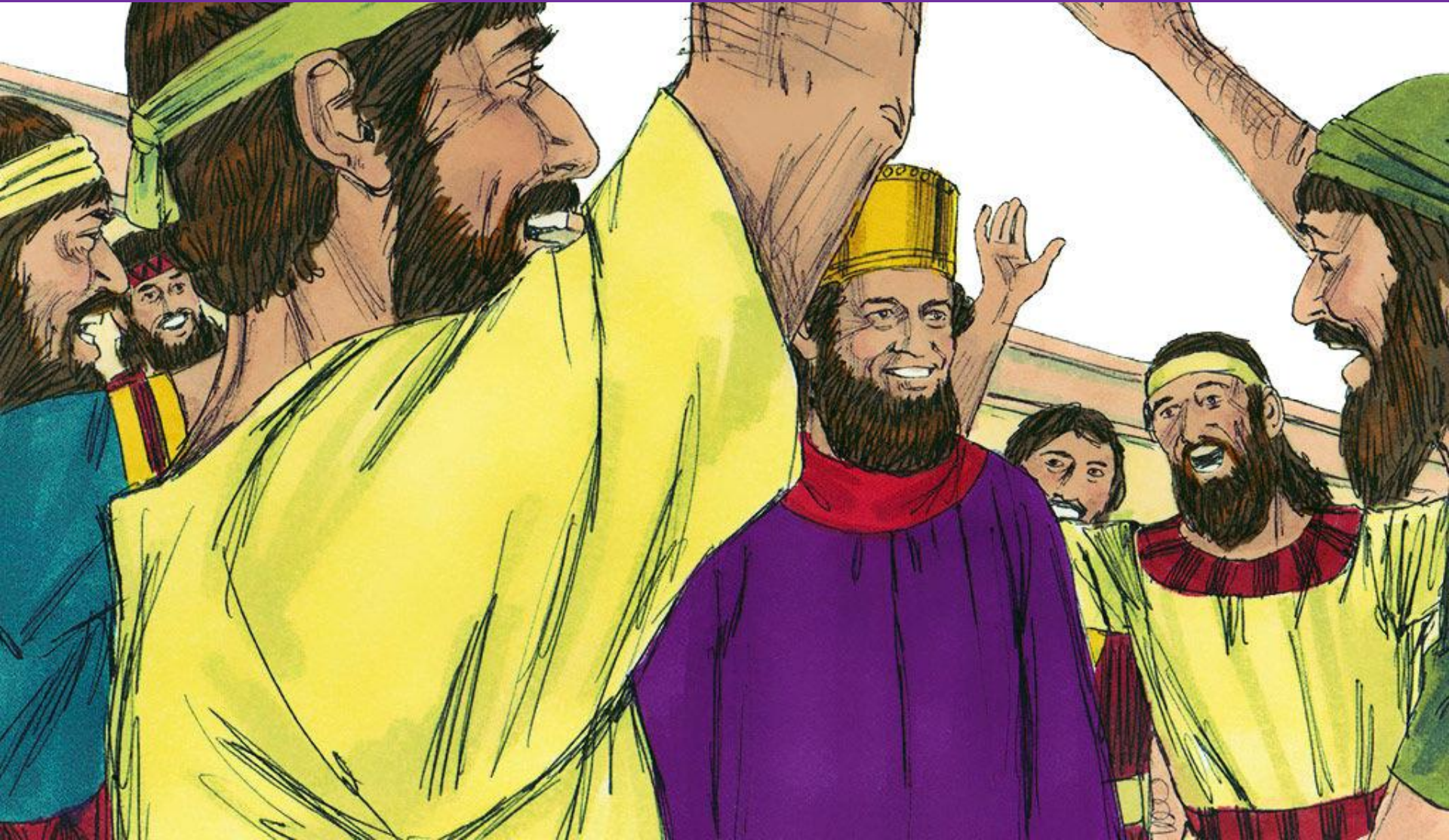
Esther 8:10



The king permits the Jews in every city to gather together and protect their lives— “to destroy, kill, and annihilate” all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, “both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar” (Esther 8:11–12; see 3:13 for the wording).



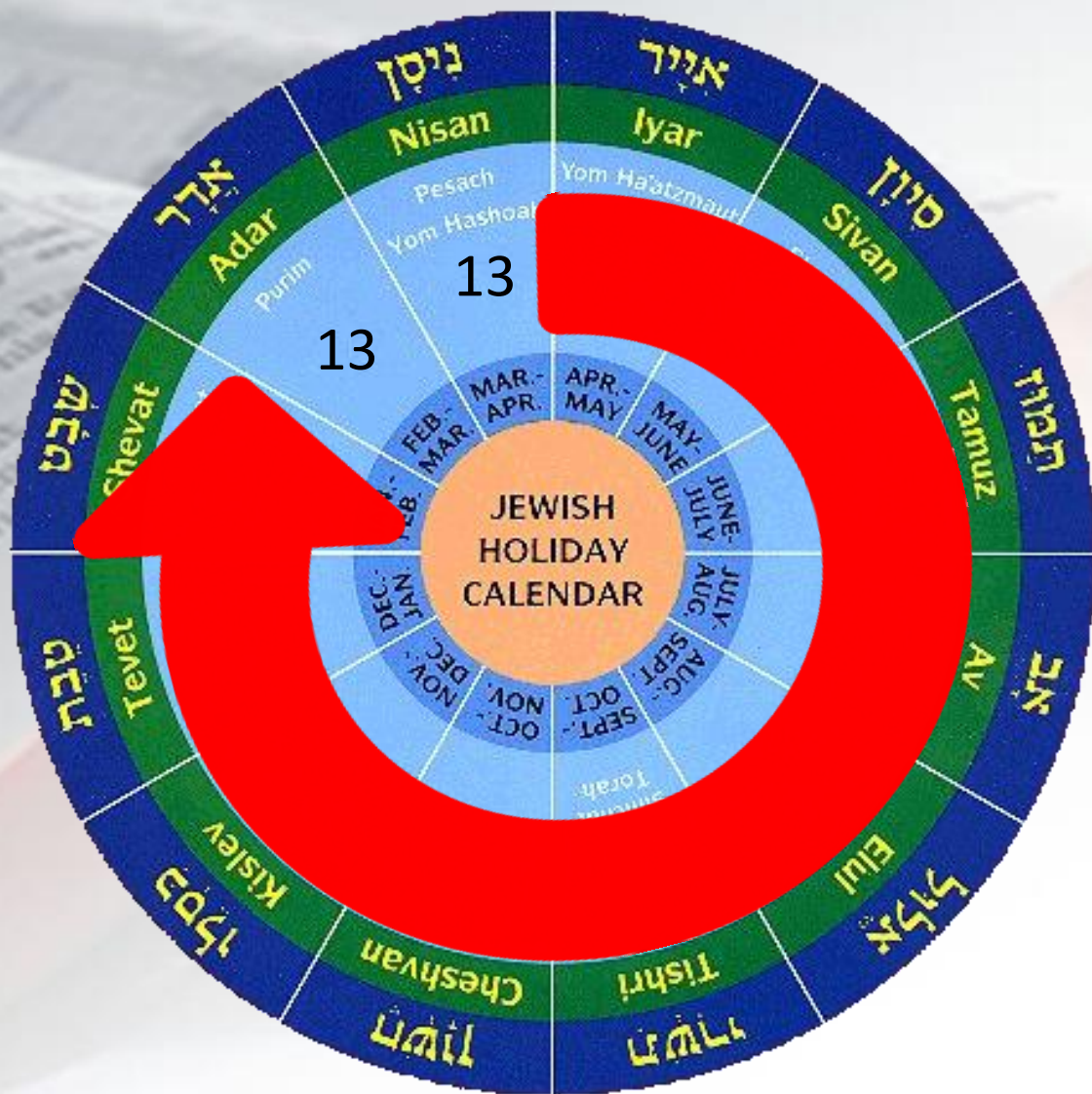
So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.
(Esther 8:15).





The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honour. And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them. (Esther 8:16–17).





Haman's Decree

13 Nisan to take effect on **13 Adar**

“to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day ... and to plunder their possessions. (Esther 3:13).



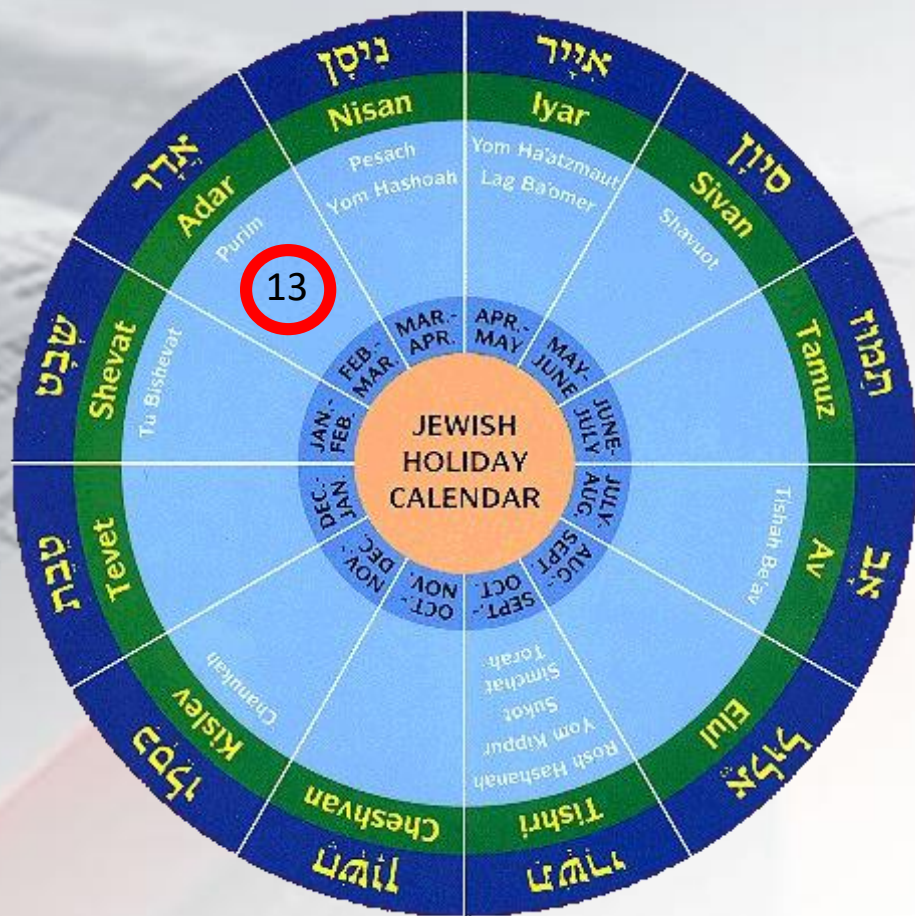


Mordecai's Counter-Decree

23 Sivan, also to take effect on **13 Adar**

By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their **lives—to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them...** (Esther 8:11)





Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar, **on the thirteenth day**, the time came for the king's command and his decree to be executed. On the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, the opposite occurred, in that the Jews themselves overpowered those who hated them.

The Jews gathered together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus **to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could withstand them, because fear of them fell upon all people.** (Esther 9:1–2).





On that day the number of those who were killed in Shushan the citadel was brought to the king. And the king said to Queen Esther, “The Jews have killed and destroyed **five hundred men** in Shushan the citadel, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king’s provinces?

Now what is your petition? It shall be granted to you. Or what is your further request? It shall be done.”

(Esther 9:11–12)



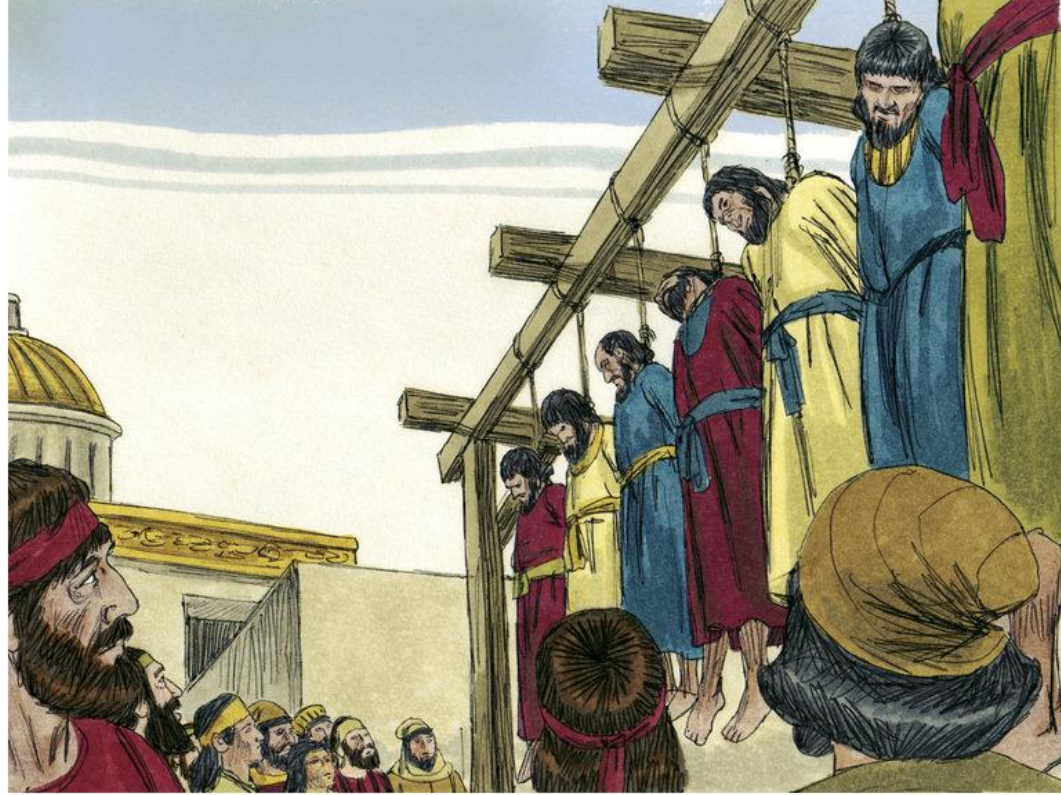
Then Esther said, “If it pleases the king, **let it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today’s decree, and let Haman’s ten sons be hanged on the gallows.**” So the king commanded this to be done; the decree was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman’s ten sons. And the Jews who were in Shushan gathered together again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed **three hundred men** at Shushan; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

(Esther 9:13–15)

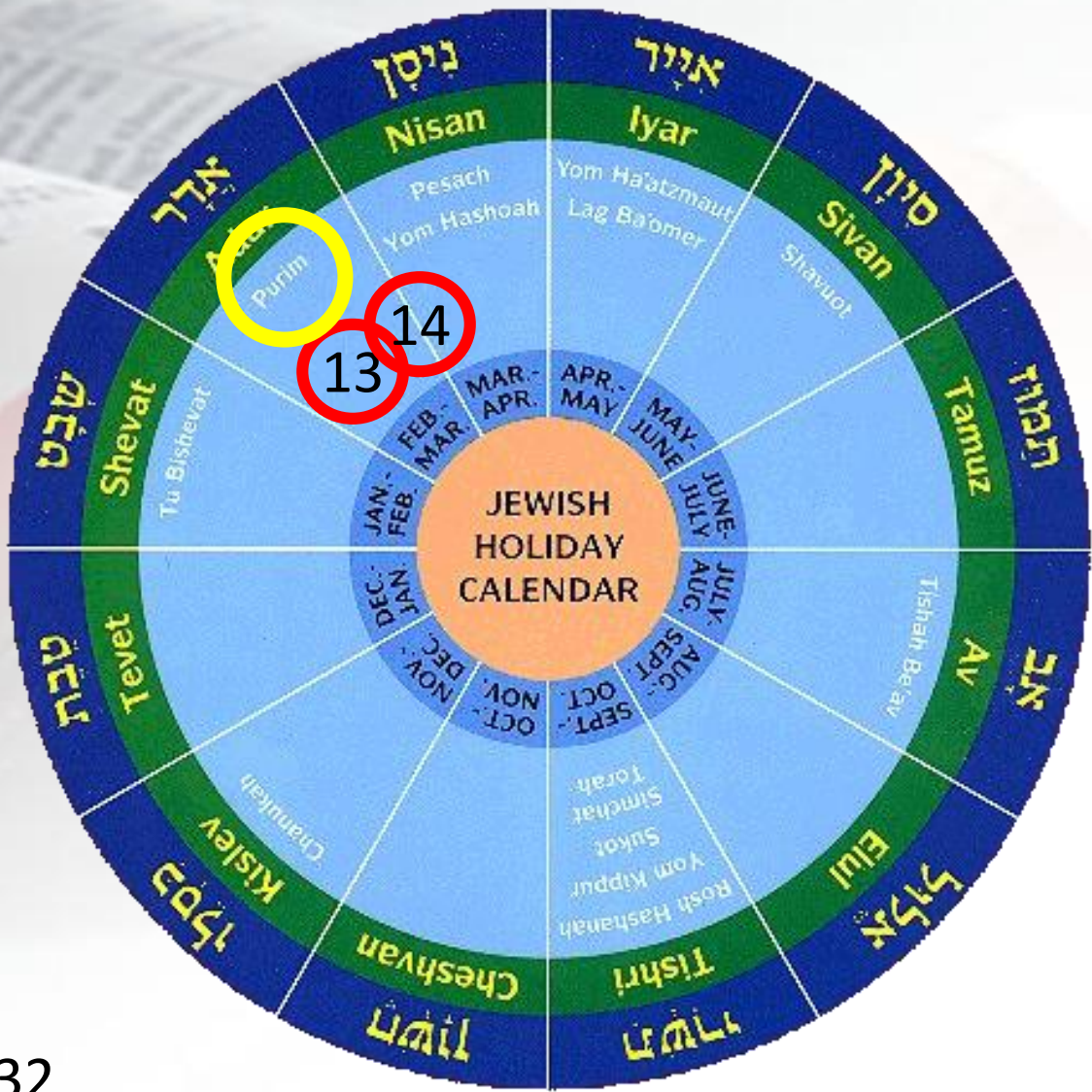


And in Shushan the citadel the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. Also Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha—the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews—they killed; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

(Esther 9:6–10)



Adar – Feast of Purim



Esther 9:29-32



To all the Jews throughout the empire

You are to celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar, as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday. Make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor.

Call these days Purim (Esther 9:21–22, 26).

Mordecai (Prime Minister)

Esther (Queen) [see 9:29]





Esther 9:30









Purim Lion at the Synagogue







For **Mordecai the Jew** was second to King Ahasuerus, and was great among the Jews and well received by the multitude of his brethren, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his countrymen. (Esther 10:3)

*The most impressive evidence for Mordecai's rise to power was the discovery of the name Marduka (= Mordecai) on a cuneiform tablet from Borsippa. He is identified as a high official in the royal court at Susa **during the early years of Xerxes' reign** ... This inscriptional evidence offers remarkable archaeological confirmation of the biblical narrative. (F B Huey Jr.)*



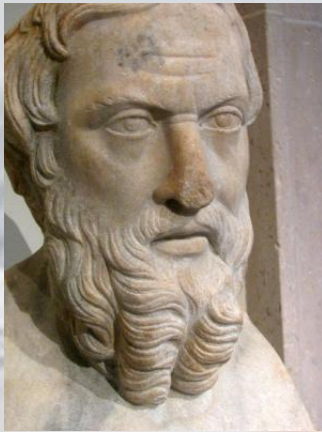


And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: “Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews. For **if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place**, but you and your father’s house will perish. **Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?**”

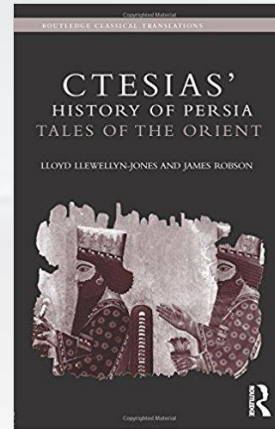
(Esther 4:13–14)



Dates	Reigns	Date	Jewish Events
605-562 BC	Nebuchadnezzar (King of Babylon)	586	Jerusalem destroyed Remaining Jews taken to Babylon
Jewish Exile			
539-530	Cyrus (King of Persia)	539	Fall of Babylon
530-522	Cambyses		
521-486	Darius 1, Hystaspes	516	Temple building completed
474 (12 th year of Xerxes) (Esther 3:7)	Decree issued <i>“to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women ... and to plunder their possessions.”</i> (Esther 3:13).		
486-464	Xerxes (Ahasuerus)	Lived for another 10 years after this decree <i>What happened to Ezra & Mordecai?</i>	
464-423	Artaxerxes 1 (Longimanus)	458 445	Ezra to Jerusalem Nehemiah to Jerusalem



Herodotus
484-485BC
The Histories



Ctesias
404 – 398 BC
*Persika: 23
Books!*

THE ASSASSINATION OF XERXES AND PRINCE DARIUS

33 Artapanus, who held a lot of influence with Xerxes, plotted with the eunuch Spamtres, who also held a lot of influence, to kill Xerxes. And they did kill him. And they persuaded his son, Artaxerxes, that his other son, Darius, had killed him. Artaxerxes arrived at Darius' house, brought there by Artapanus. Darius shouted a good deal and refuted all claims that he was his father's murderer: he was killed.

Xerxes & Vashti

Darius

Artaxerxes
464-423 BC

Hystaspis

18 years old when he became King, so he was born in 482 BC, the 4th year of Xerxes. Quite likely she was pregnant during the 3rd year (Esther 3:1) when she was invited to “show the peoples and the princes her beauty”. Almost certainly Vashti would have returned to favour when her son became King, if she was still alive.



God's Perfect Pattern

A Greatness of Ahasuerus (1:1-8)	A= Greatness of Ahas. and Mordecai (Ch 10)
B Two banquets of Persians (1:1-8)	B= Two banquets of Jews (9:20-32)
C Esther identifies as a Gentile (2:10-20)	C= Gentiles identify as Jews (8:17)
D Elevation of Haman (3:1)	D= Elevation of Mordecai (8:15)
E Anti-Jewish Edict (3:12-15)	E= Pro-Jewish Edict (8:9-14)
F Fateful exchange of Mordecai and Esther (Ch 4)	F= Fateful Exchange of Ahasuerus and Esther (7:1-6)
G. Esther's First Banquet (5:6-8)	G= Esther's Second Banquet (7:1-6)
H Royal Procession (Ch 6)	



What have we learned?

1. What is impossible for man, is possible for God
2. He is the Master of time and His timing is immaculate
3. He exalts people and deposes them, as it pleases Him
4. God is faithful to His covenant promises
5. Israel is at the centre of His great purpose
6. We have to play our part, if only for a time
7. Israel enjoy Purim, but it is a man-made feast...

