

WOMEN IN THE
BIBLE
RUTH &
ESTHER

2020
SESSION
8

WOMEN IN THE
BIBLE
RUTH &
ESTHER

PART 5

The book of
Esther

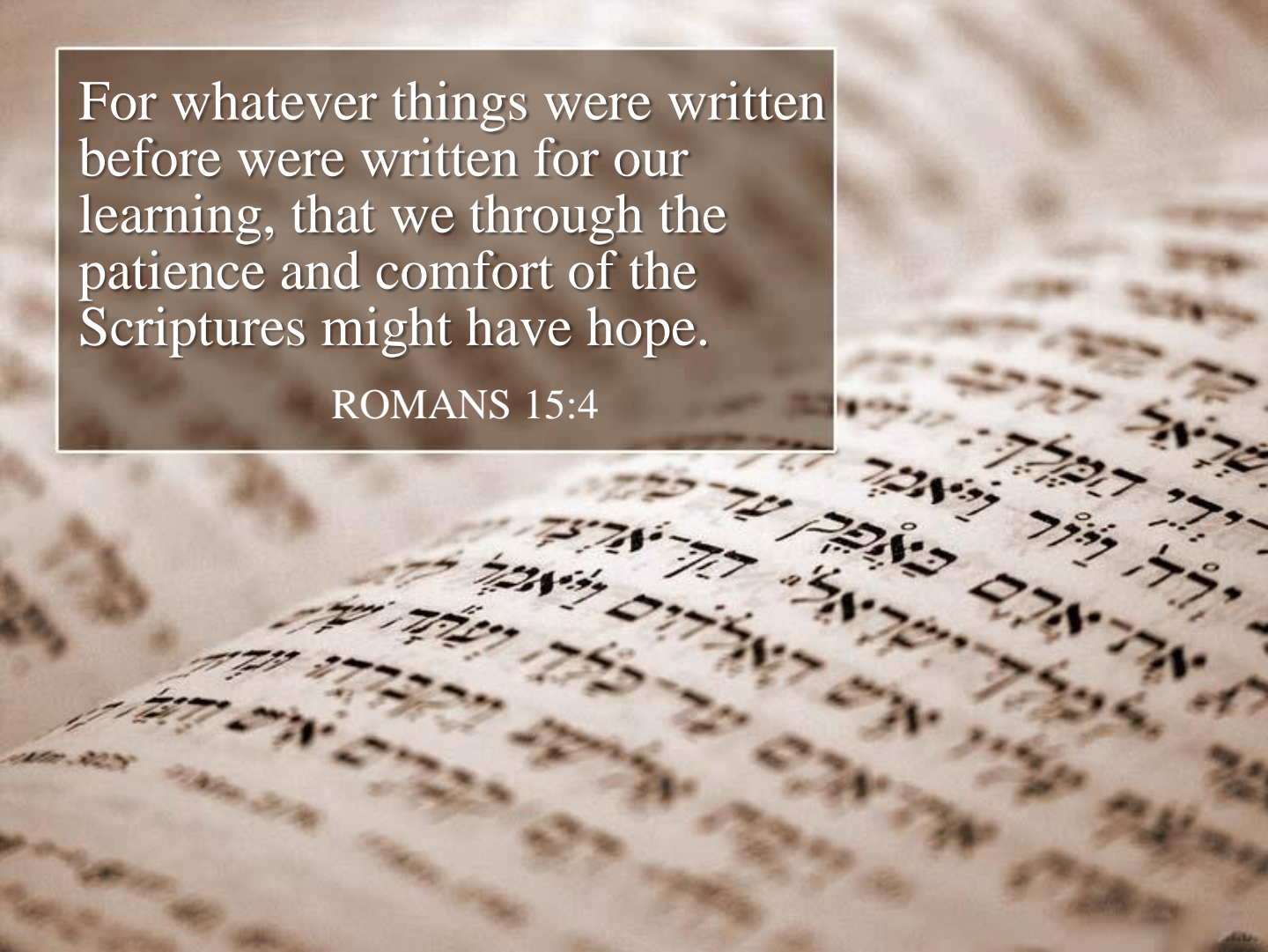


Esther

- One of only two Bible books named for women, many including Luther and Calvin have questioned why this book is in the Bible.
- After all:
 - It doesn't mention God
 - It doesn't predict the Messiah
 - It doesn't mention faith or worship
 - It doesn't mention anything "religious"
 - There's no uplifting "moral of the story"

For whatever things were written
before were written for our
learning, that we through the
patience and comfort of the
Scriptures might have hope.

ROMANS 15:4



Underlying Concepts

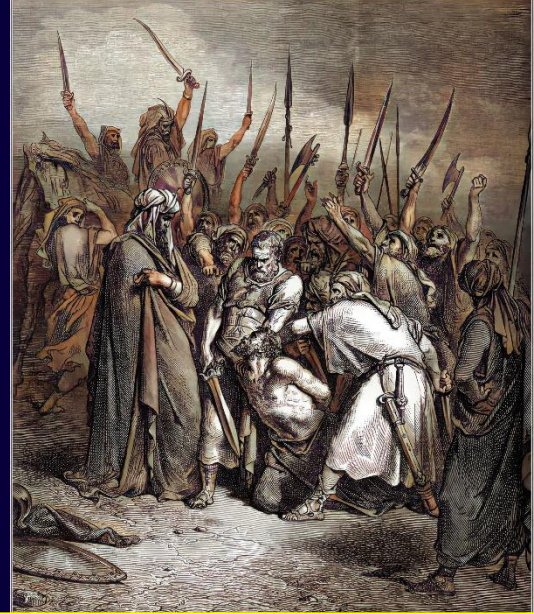
- Esther – the book of something hidden (Book of Esther)
- Purim – the casting of lots – “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.” (Proverb 16:33)
- The Law of the Medes and the Persians, a royal decree cannot be changed. (Daniel 6:8)
- Coincidence or providential hand of God?
- Ancient Everlasting Hatred (Ezekiel 35:5-7)



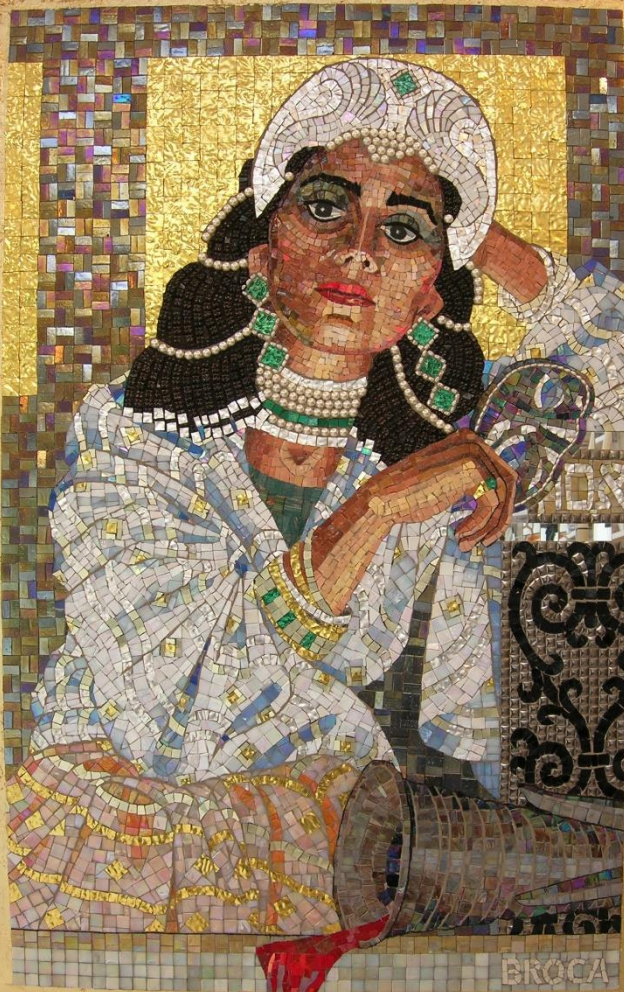
עוֹלָם אֵיבָת

עוֹלָם אֵיבָת

Saul's **disobedience**
to God spared Agag
and led to **Haman**.



David's **mercy**
to Shimei led to
Mordecai and
Esther.



Queen Esther Revealing Her True Identity

Those
who do
not confront
evil
resent those
who do.

The literary structure

- Prologue (situation)
- 2-3 Xerxes' first decree
- 4-5 Haman's exasperation with Mordecai
- Xerxes insomnia
- 6-7 Mordecai's exaltation over Haman
- 8-9 Xerxes second decree
- 10 Epilogue (celebration)

Part 1

Part 2

Part 3

Part 4

Part 5

Part 6

DANGER

(1-5)

DELIVERANCE

(6-10)

E
S
T
H
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R



R
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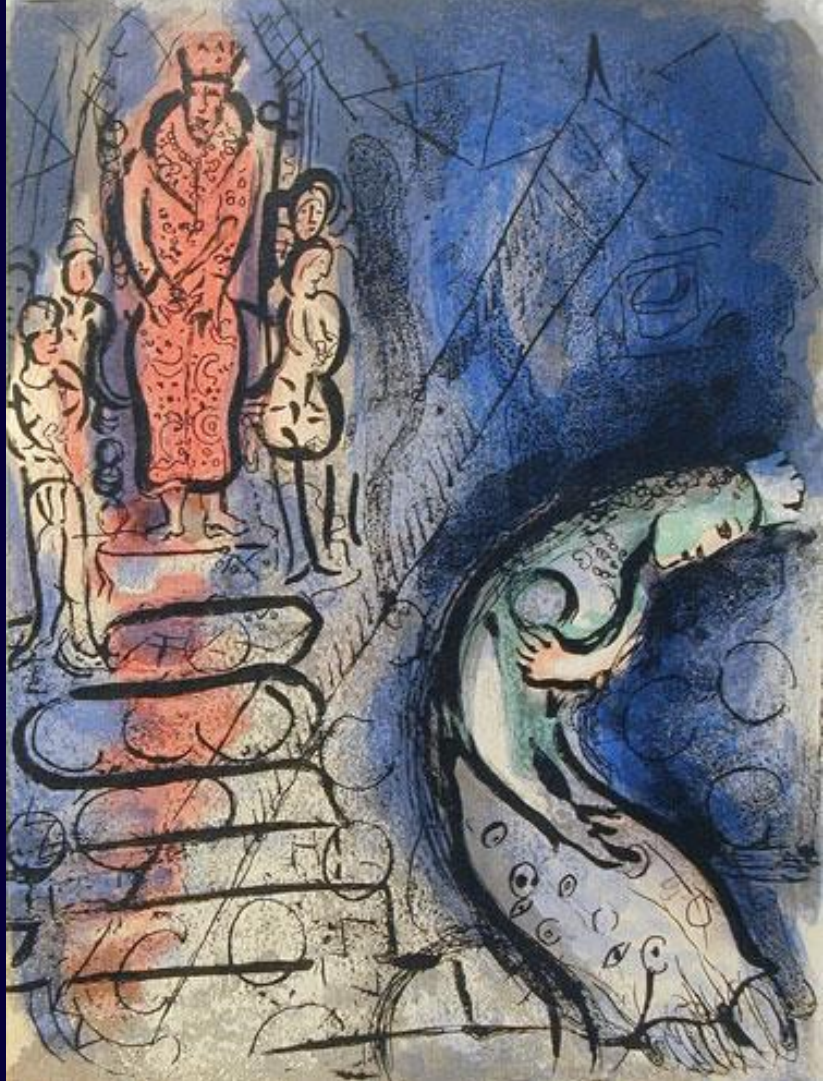
1 King Ahasuerus gave a feast for all his generals and officials. He ordered Queen Vashti to show off her beauty, but she refused, so his counselors advised him to replace her.



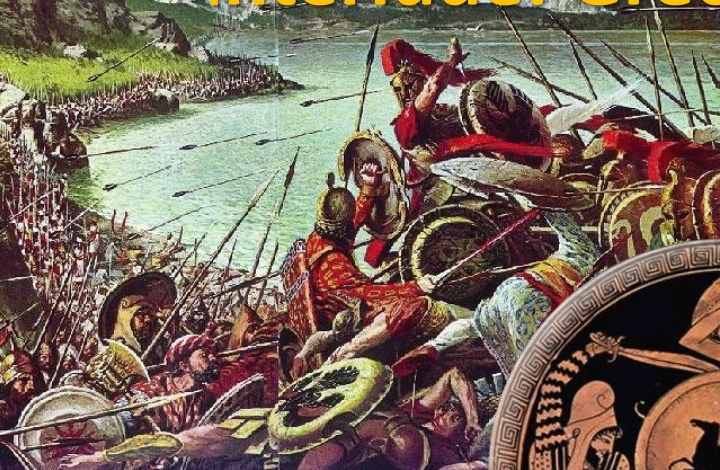
"Queen Vashti deposed" by Ernest Normand, 1890.

“... let it be
recorded in the
laws of the Persians
and the Medes, so
that it will not be
altered, that Vashti
shall come no more
before King
Ahasuerus...”

“Ahaseurus Banishes Vashti –
Assérus Chasse Vashti”
Marc Chagall, 1960.

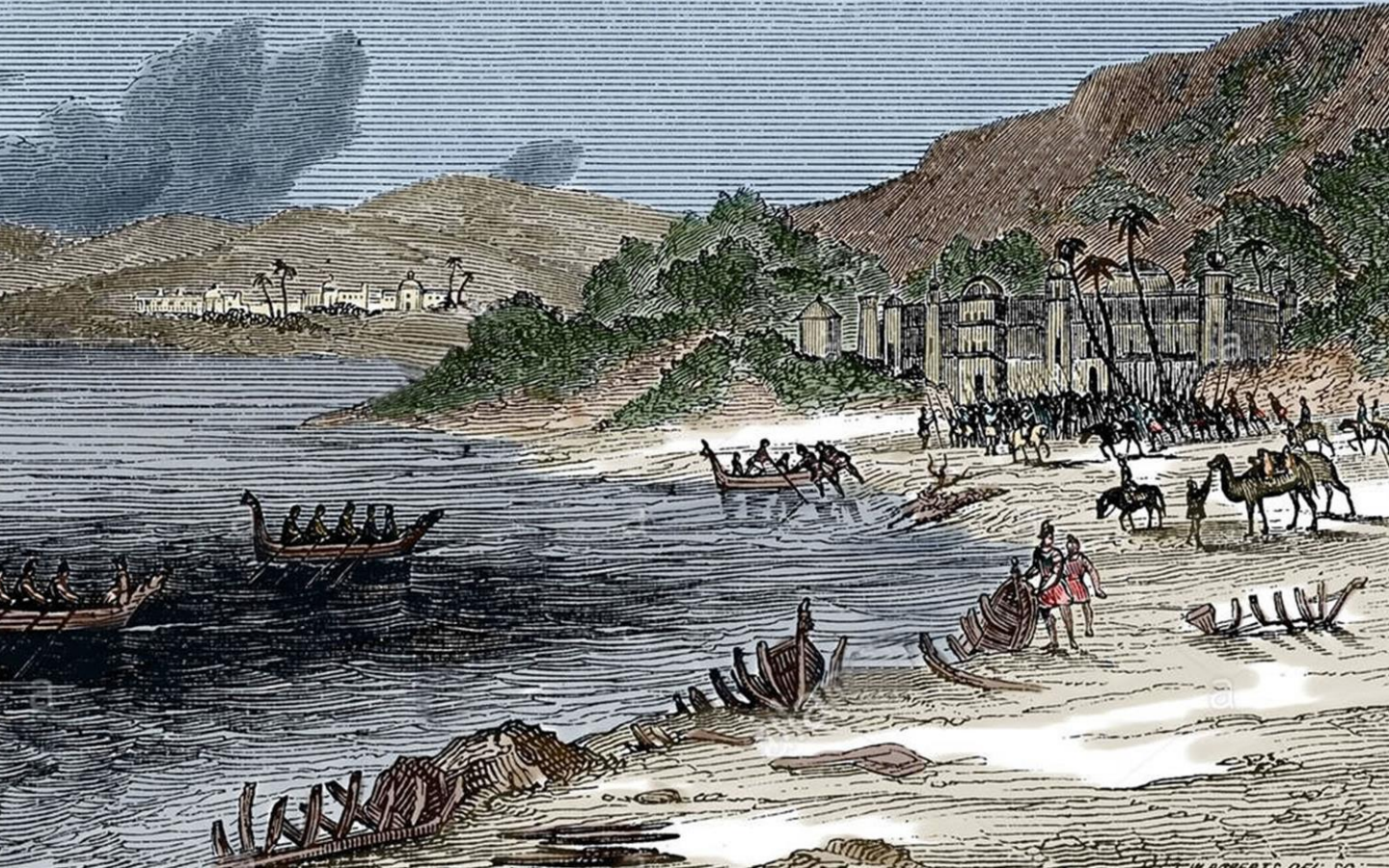


Interlude: Greco-Persian War



481-479 BC

Only 5.000 of the massive defeated Persian army and navy managed to straggle back to Asia.



2

Ex-queen Vashti was banned from ever seeing Xerxes. Memucan and other advisers advised Xerxes to hold a competition for a new queen.



Mordecai raised Esther. She was taken into the king's harem and was chosen as queen. Mordecai instructed her to hide her ethnicity.



Mordecai overheard a plot and told Esther who told Xerxes.



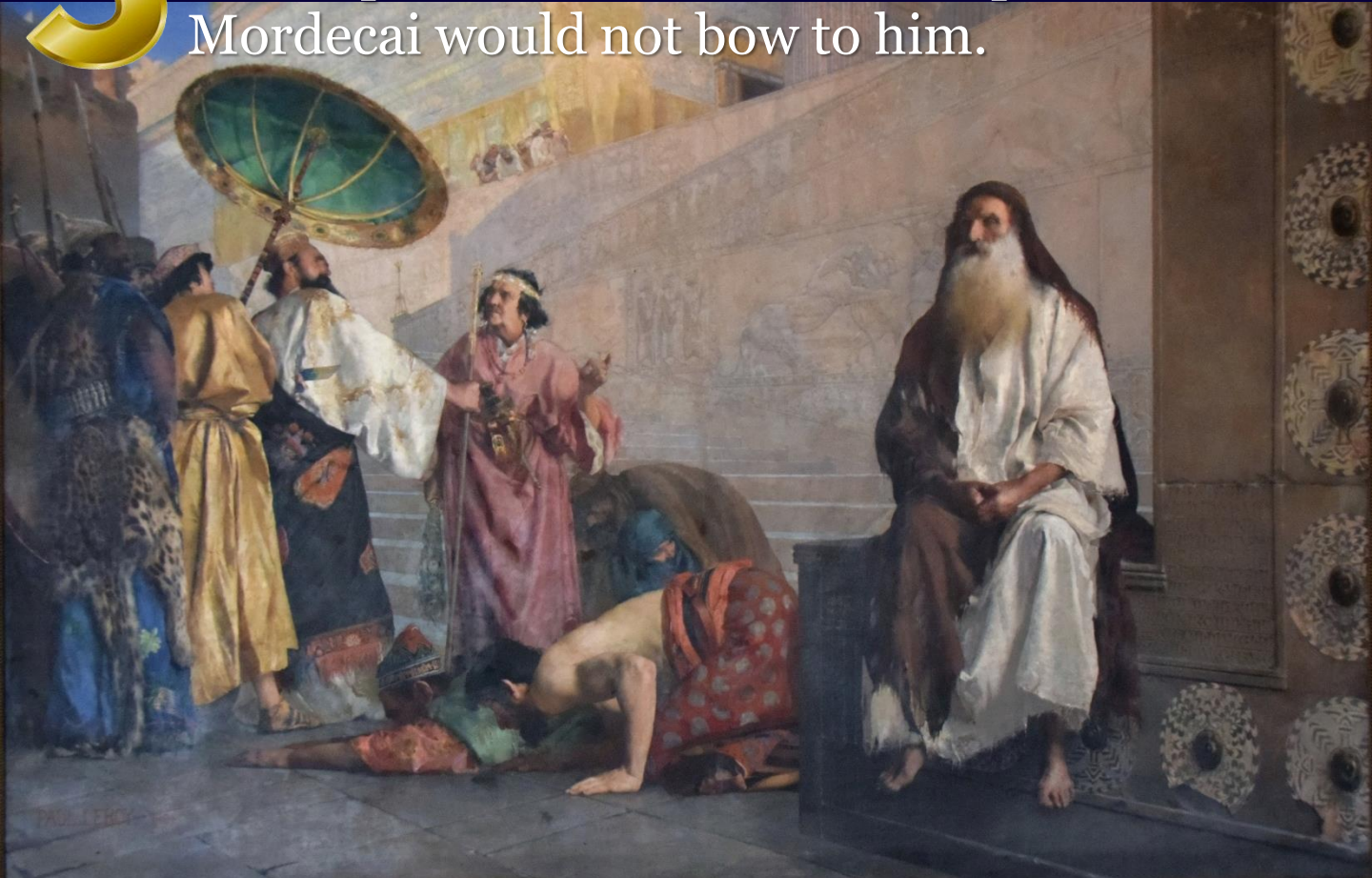
The plotters were executed and the incident forgotten.

**TWO
YEARS
LATER**

OR SO

3

The king promoted Haman to Grand Vizier and required all to bow when he passed, but Mordecai would not bow to him.





A furious Haman
bribed Xerxes to let
him kill all Jews.

The king gave his
seal, the lot was
cast, and
the date to
kill all Jews
was set as
13 Adar,
the last
date of the
year.

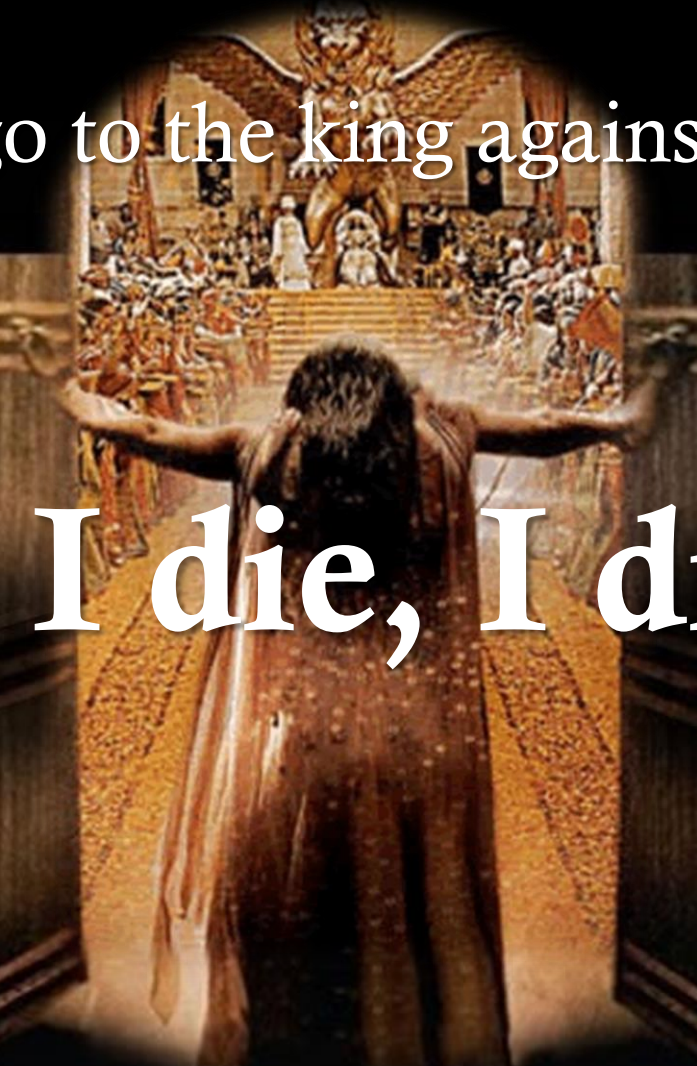
4 Mordecai asked
Esther to plead with
the king. Esther said,
“I cannot. It is against the
law to approach unbidden.”
“Perhaps you were born...



FOR SUCH A
time
AS **THIS**

“I will go to the king against the law.

“If I die, I die!”



5

Esther won favour with the king and invited the king and Haman to wine and dessert. There, she invited them to a feast the next day.



'Permission to Speak' by Lilian Broca, 2009.



That night, Haman built an enormous gallows from which to hang Mordecai.

Esther

6

That night the king could not sleep. He read about the plot that Mordecai foiled but was not rewarded for.



As the king wondered how to amend his oversight and honor Mordecai, Haman arrived with a plan... which he subtly revised to please the king.



“Triumph of Mordecai” by Richard McBee, 1980.

Haman came to ask to hang Mordecai,
but was ordered to honor him instead.



"The Triumph of Mordechai" by Jacob Willemszoon de Wet, the Elder, c. 1671.

“Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!”



“The Triumph of Mordecai” by Jean François de Troy, c. 1736.

7 At the promised feast, the king again asked Esther, “What is your request?” She said, “My people have been sold by Haman.”



A furious Ahasuerus arose in his wrath from the banquet and went to the palace garden to ponder



"Wrath of Ahasuerus" by Jan Steen, c. 1671-1873.

Imploring Esther for mercy, Haman tripped and fell on her just as the simmering king returned.



Haman was hung from his own gallows.

A large, glowing orange and yellow meteor streaks diagonally across the upper half of the image. Below it, the curved horizon of the Earth is visible, showing a thin layer of atmosphere and a dark, textured surface. The background is a deep black space filled with small white stars.

**Leaving just
one minor
problem...**

Leaving just one minor problem...

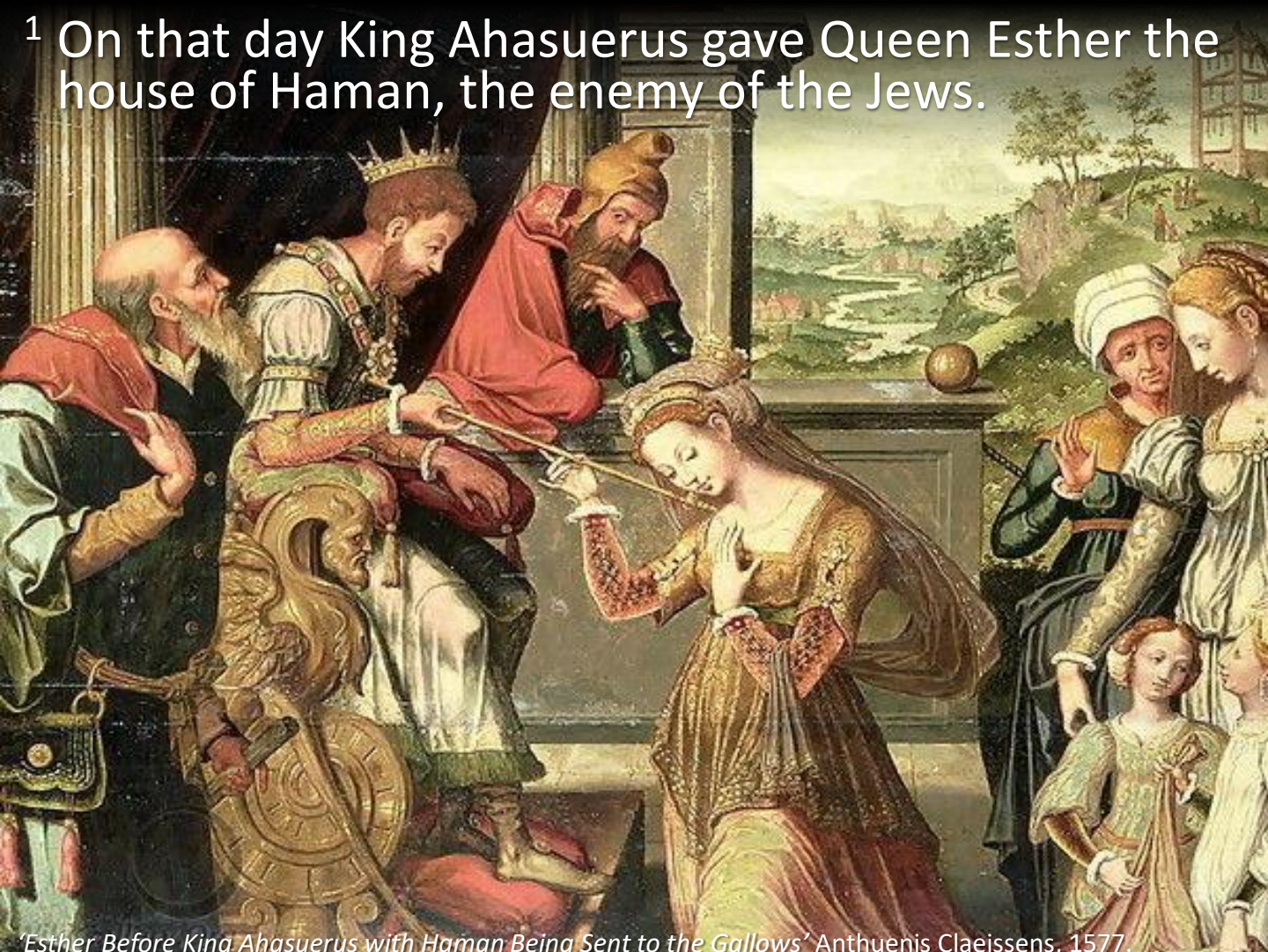


The book of

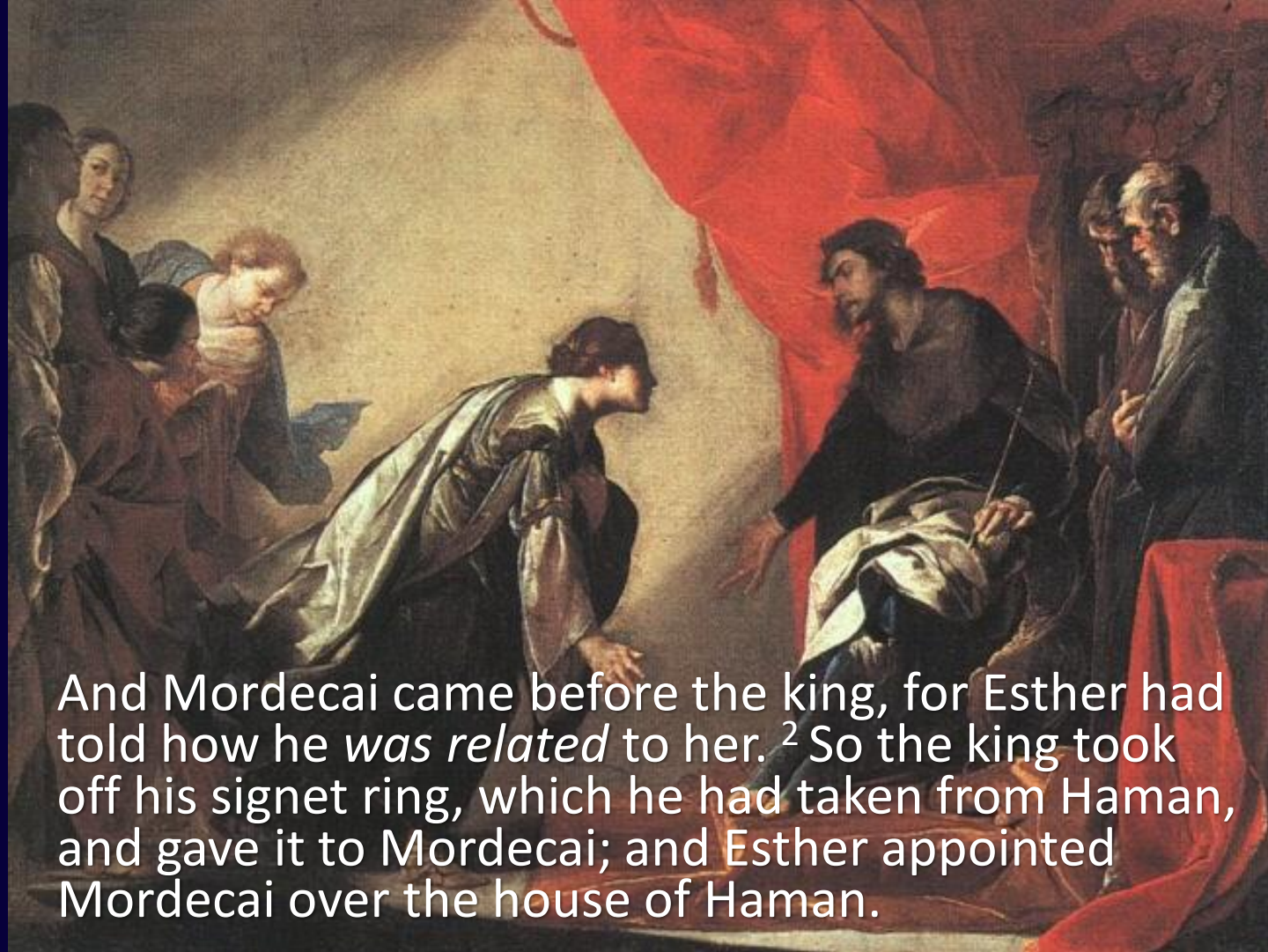
Esther

Chapter 8

¹ On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews.



'Esther Before King Ahasuerus with Haman Being Sent to the Gallows' Anthuenis Claeissens. 1577.



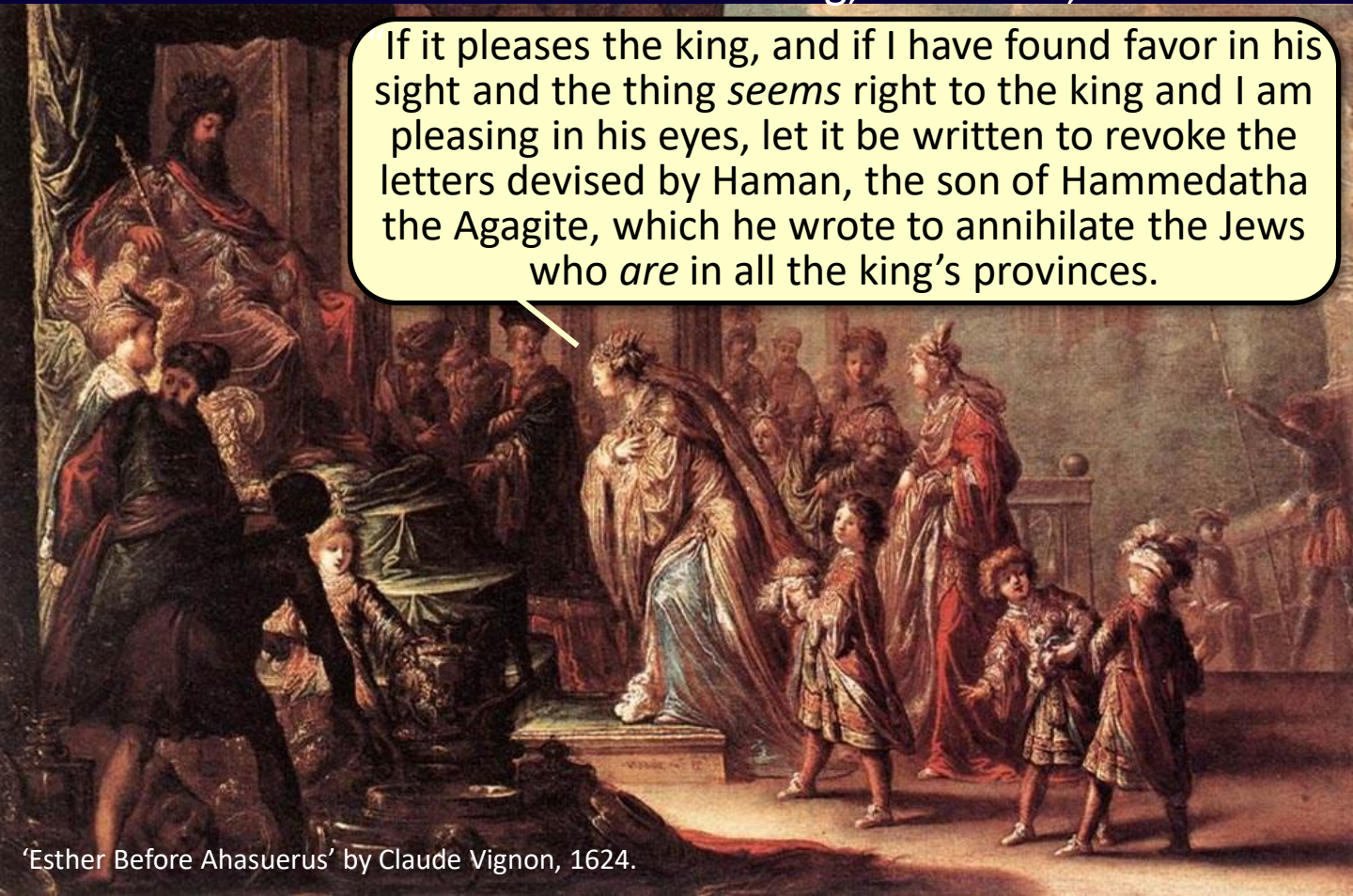
And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told how he *was related* to her.² So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman.

³ Now Esther spoke again to the king, fell down at his feet, and implored him with tears to counteract the evil of Haman the Agagite, and the scheme which he had devised against the Jews.



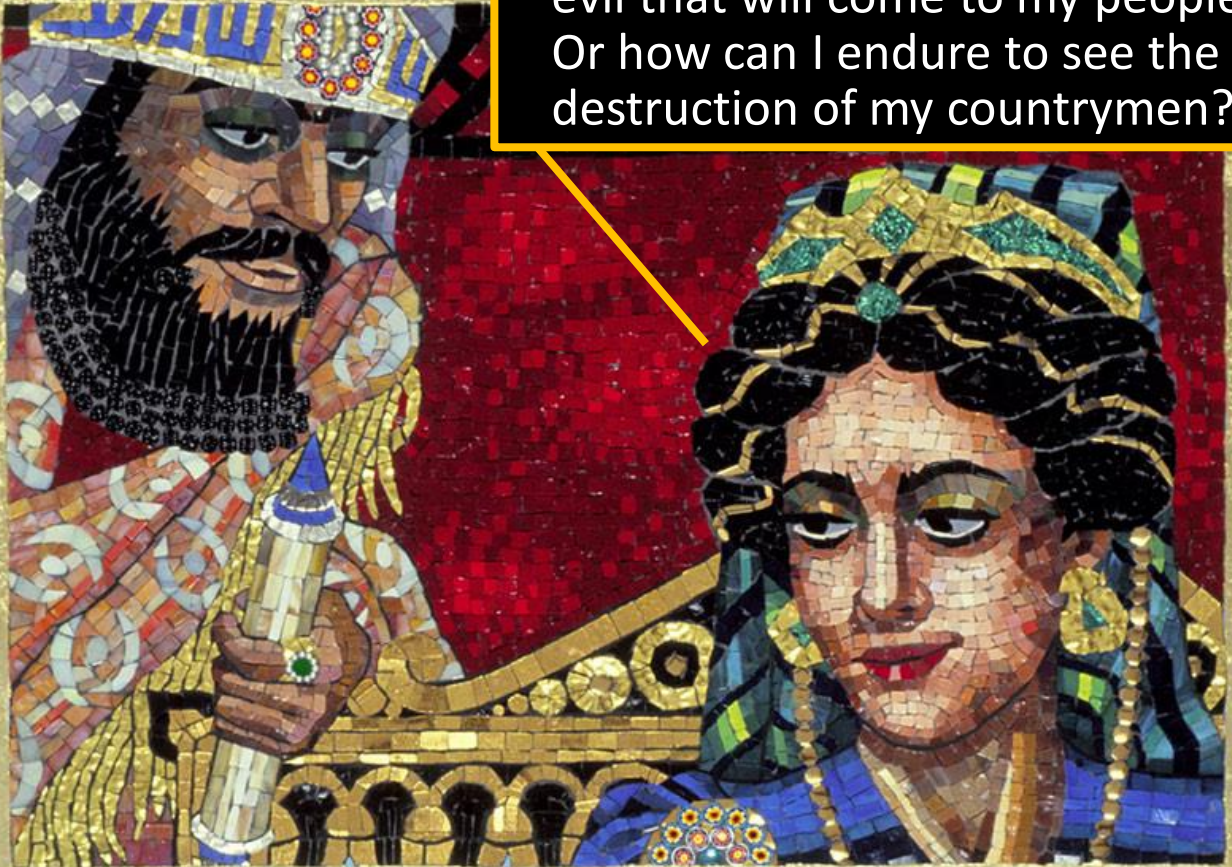
⁴ And the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king, ⁵ and said,

If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight and the thing *seems* right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Jews who *are* in all the king's provinces.

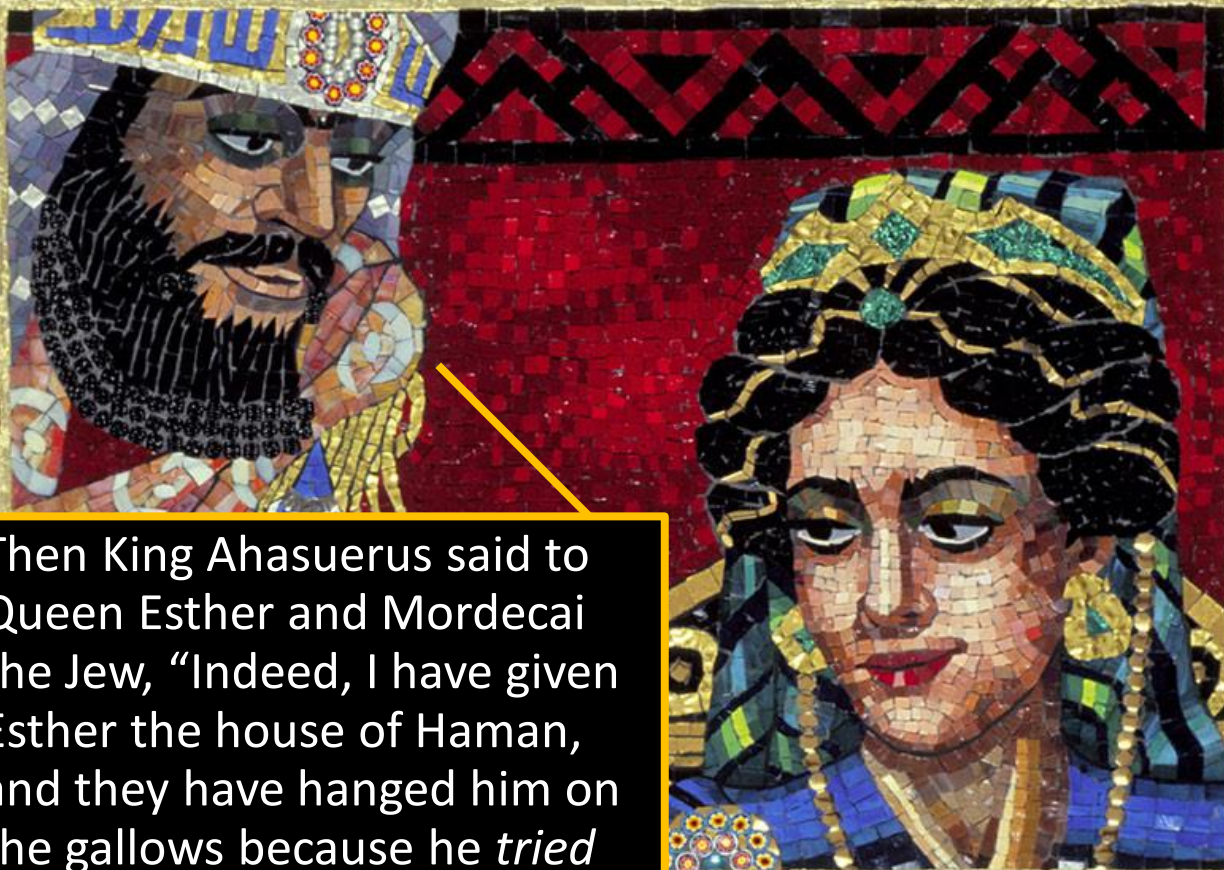


'Esther Before Ahasuerus' by Claude Vignon, 1624.

⁶ “For how can I endure to see the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?”



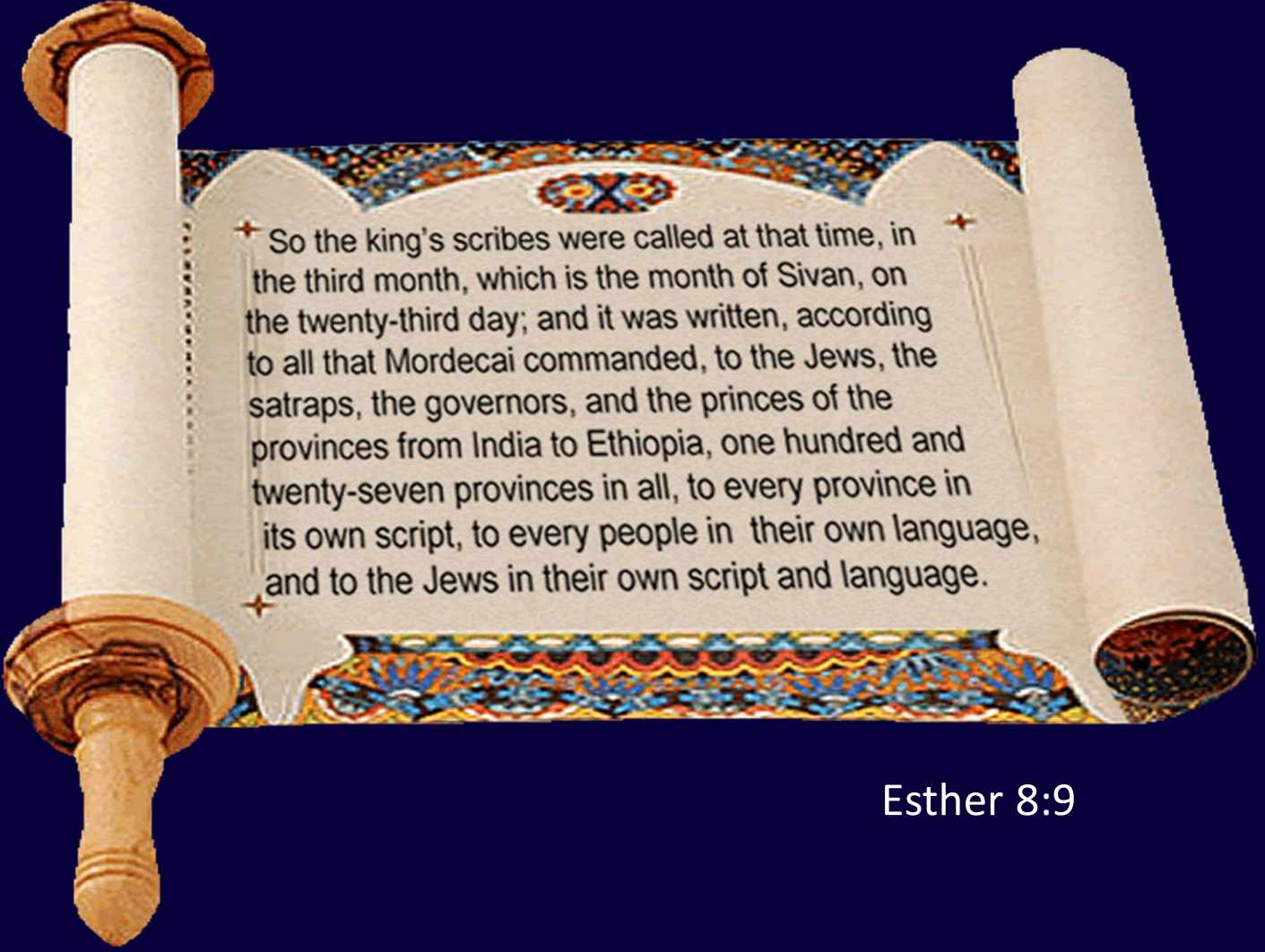
‘Surreptitious Dialogue’ by Lilian Broca, 2007.



⁷ Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, “Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he *tried to lay his hand on the Jews.*”

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."



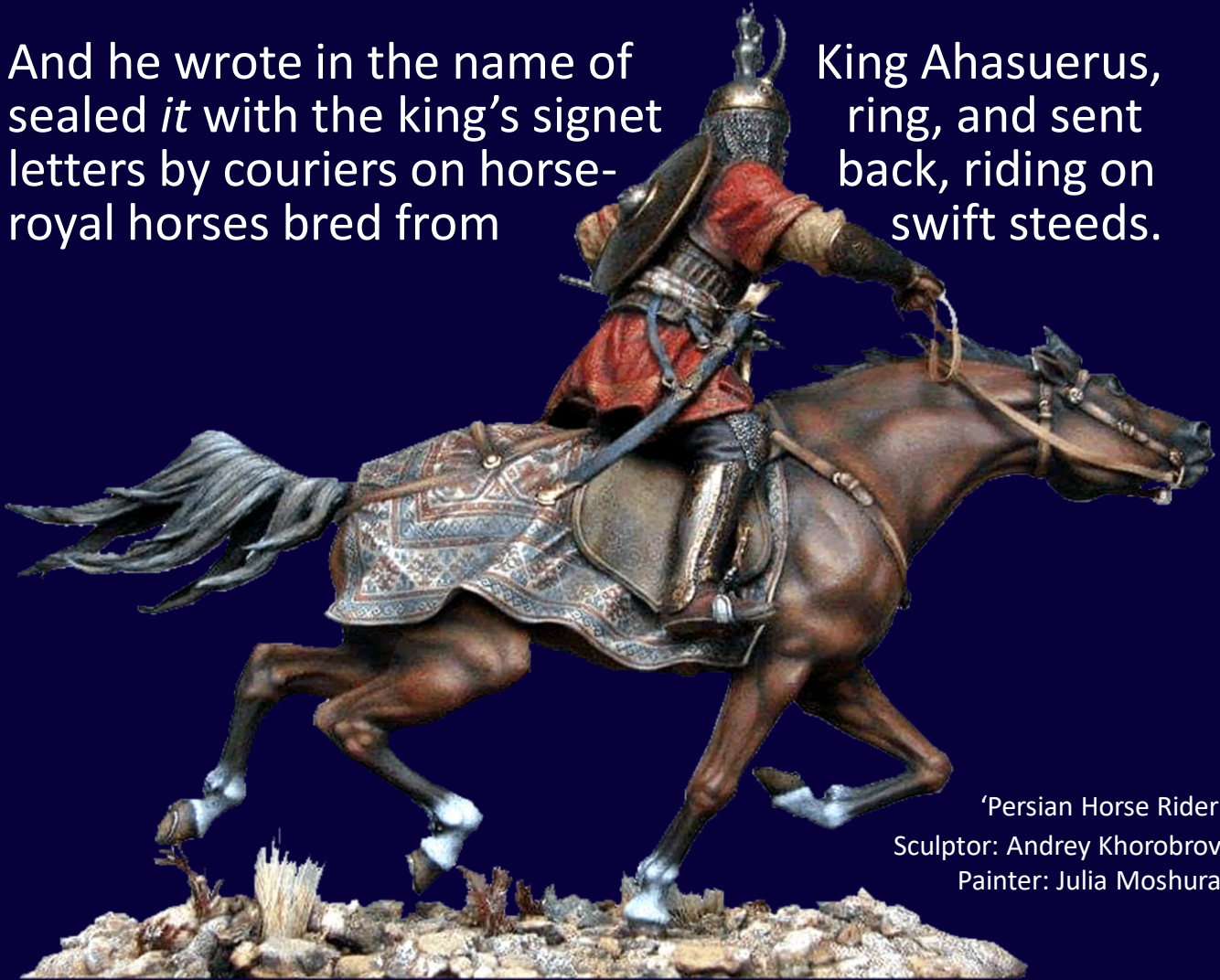


✦ So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven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

Esther 8:9

¹⁰ And he wrote in the name of
sealed *it* with the king's signet
letters by couriers on horse-
royal horses bred from

King Ahasuerus,
ring, and sent
back, riding on
swift steeds.

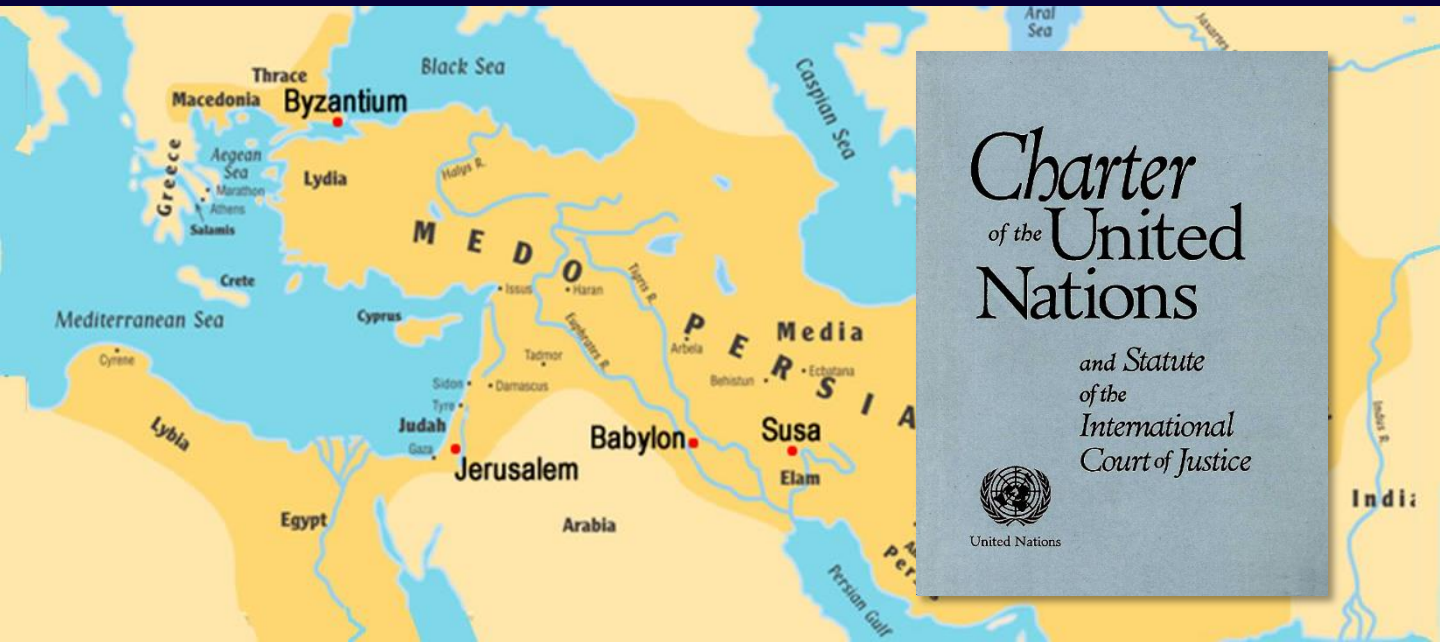


'Persian Horse Rider'

Sculptor: Andrey Khorobrov;

Painter: Julia Moshura.

¹¹ 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, *both* little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, ¹² on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which *is* the month of Adar.



¹¹ 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, *both* little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, ¹² on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which *is* the month of Adar.

Some English translations attach the little children and women to the Agagites:-

Some seem to attach the little children and women to the Jews:-

“Annihilate all the **forces of any people or province, including their women and children,** that would assault the Jews and plunder them.”

“Annihilate all the forces of any people or province, that would assault the **Jews and their women and children,** and plunder them.”

¹¹ 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, *both* little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, ¹² on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which *is* the month of Adar.

אֲשֶׁר נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ לַיהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל-עִיר-וְעִיר לְהַקְהֵל וּלְעֹמֵד עַל-נַפְשָׁם לְהַשְׁמִיד
וּלְהַרְגַּ וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת-כָּל-חַיִּל עִם וּמְדִינָה הַצָּרִים אֹתָם טָף וְנָשִׁים וּשְׁלָלָם לְבוֹז:

Wherein granted king Jews city gather stand soul/life destroy slay
cause to perish power people province besiege little ones women
plunder snatch away.

Wherein granted the king to Jews in every city to gather, to stand for
their life, to destroy, to slay, to cause to perish the power of people
and province that assault little ones and women and take the spoil
to take away.

Forms of vengeance (Latin. *vendicare*)

Retaliation

(Always Negative)

To pay back a wrong or injury; return like for like, usually to return evil for evil.

- Personal
- Amoral
- Punitive
- Angry
- Bitter
- Vindictive
- Wrathful
- Human



Retribution

(Sometimes Positive)

A basis of life; a deserved punishment; return for evil done; or sometimes good.

- Impersonal
- Moral
- Consequential
- Dispassionate
- Judicious
- Just
- Self-controlled
- God-like



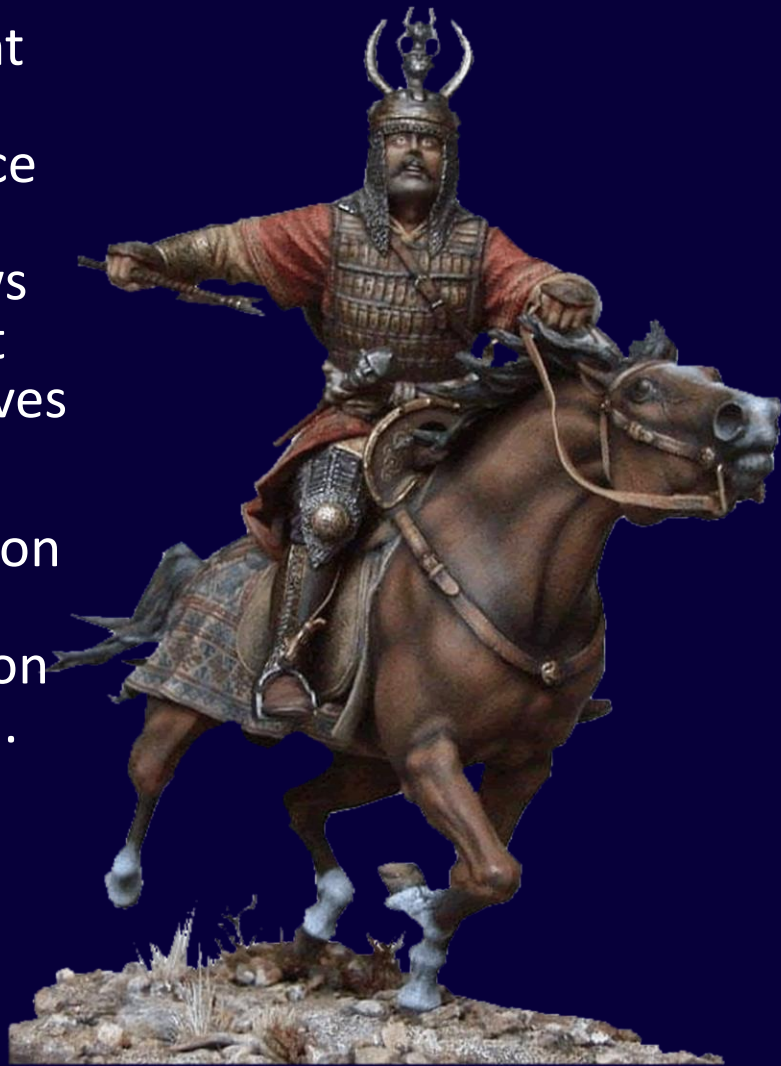
¹¹ By these letters the king permitted the Jews who *were* in every city to gather together and protect their lives—to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province **that would assault them with their little children and women and plunder their possessions**, ¹² on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which *is* the month of Adar.



13 A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province and published for all people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

14 The couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Shushan the citadel.

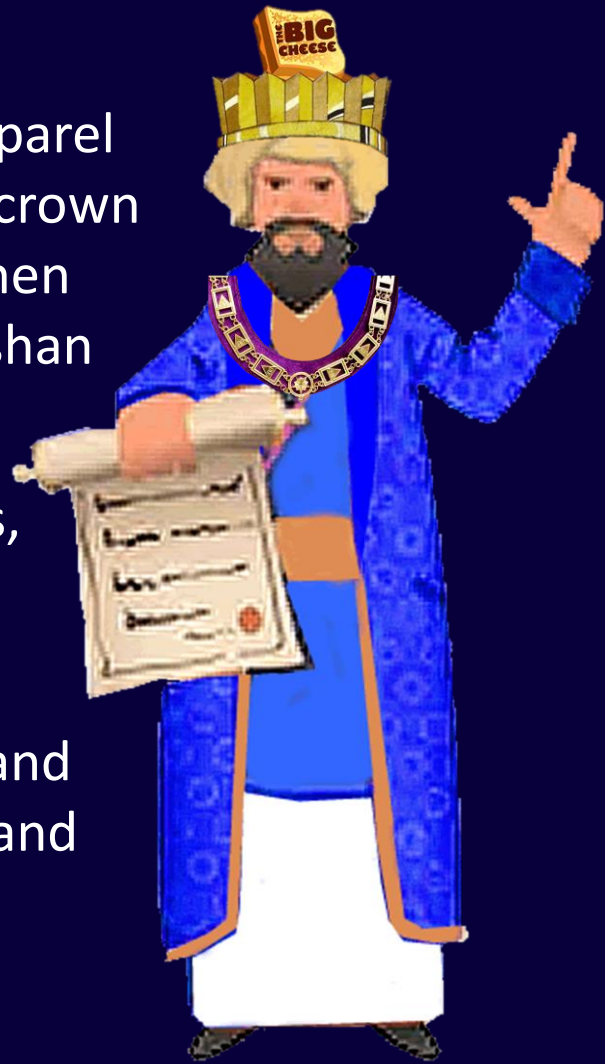
'Persian Horse Rider'
Sculptor: Andrey Khorobrov;
Painter: Julia Moshura.



¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor.

¹⁷ 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.

The book of

Esther

Chapter 9

Esther 9 – Revenge of the Jews

¹ 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.



² 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.

³ And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and all those doing the king's work, helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.

⁴ For Mordecai *was* great in the king's palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for this man Mordecai became increasingly prominent.

⁵ Thus the Jews defeated all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did what they pleased with those who hated them.



⁶ And in Shushan the citadel the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men.

⁷ Also Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,⁸ Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, ⁹ Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha— ¹⁰ 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.

Verses 7-9 are written in an unusual way in the authentic Megillah scrolls of the past 2,000 years:

- Names are written in a column, each preceded by the Hebrew word וְאֵת (“and”).
- Three letters (ח, ש, ז) are written very small and one (ו) very large; this stands for the Jewish year 5707.
- But wait, there’s more (LATER).

וְאֵת

וְאֵת

וְאֵת

וְאֵת

וְאֵת

וְאֵת

וְאֵת

וְאֵת

וְאֵת

וְאֵת

וְאֵת

Esther 9:7

פָּרְשָׁנְדָּתָא

דַּלְפּוֹן

אֶסְפָּתָא:

פּוֹרָתָא

אֲדַלְיָא

אֲרִידָתָא:

פָּרְמָשְׁתָּא:

אֲרִיסַי

אֲרַדַּי

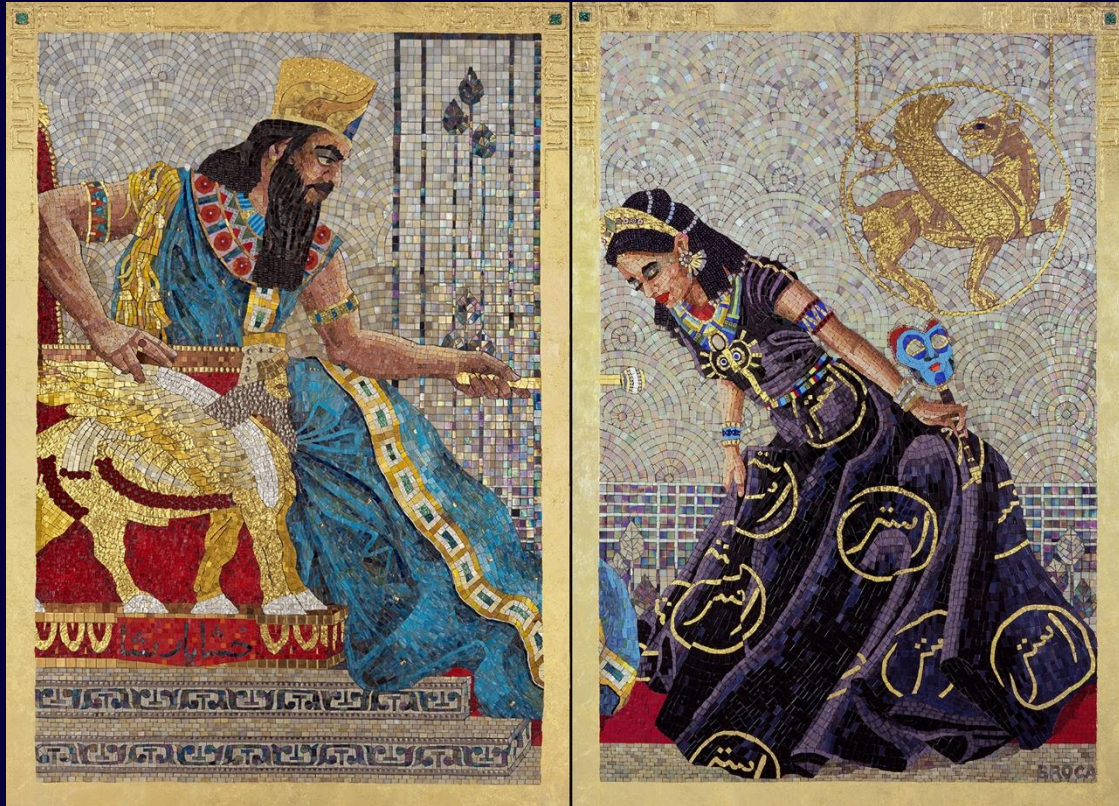
וְיֵתָא:

¹¹ On that day the number of those who were killed in Shushan the citadel was brought to the king.



¹² 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.”

- 13 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."



'Permission to speak' by Lilian Broca, 2009.

14 So the king commanded this to be done; the decree was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons.



"Scroll of Esther of Ferrara, Italy" by Moshe ben Avraham Pascarol, 1617.

¹⁵ 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.

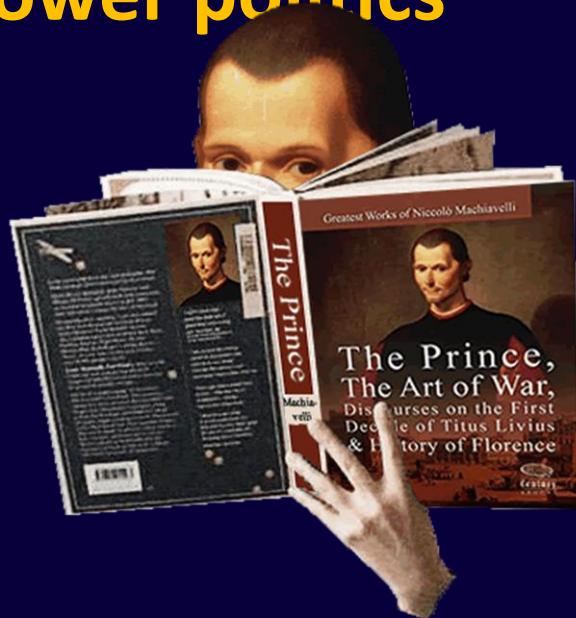




¹⁶ The remainder of the Jews in the king's provinces gathered together and protected their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder. ¹⁷ *This was* on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. And on the fourteenth of *the month* they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

Machiavelli's power politics

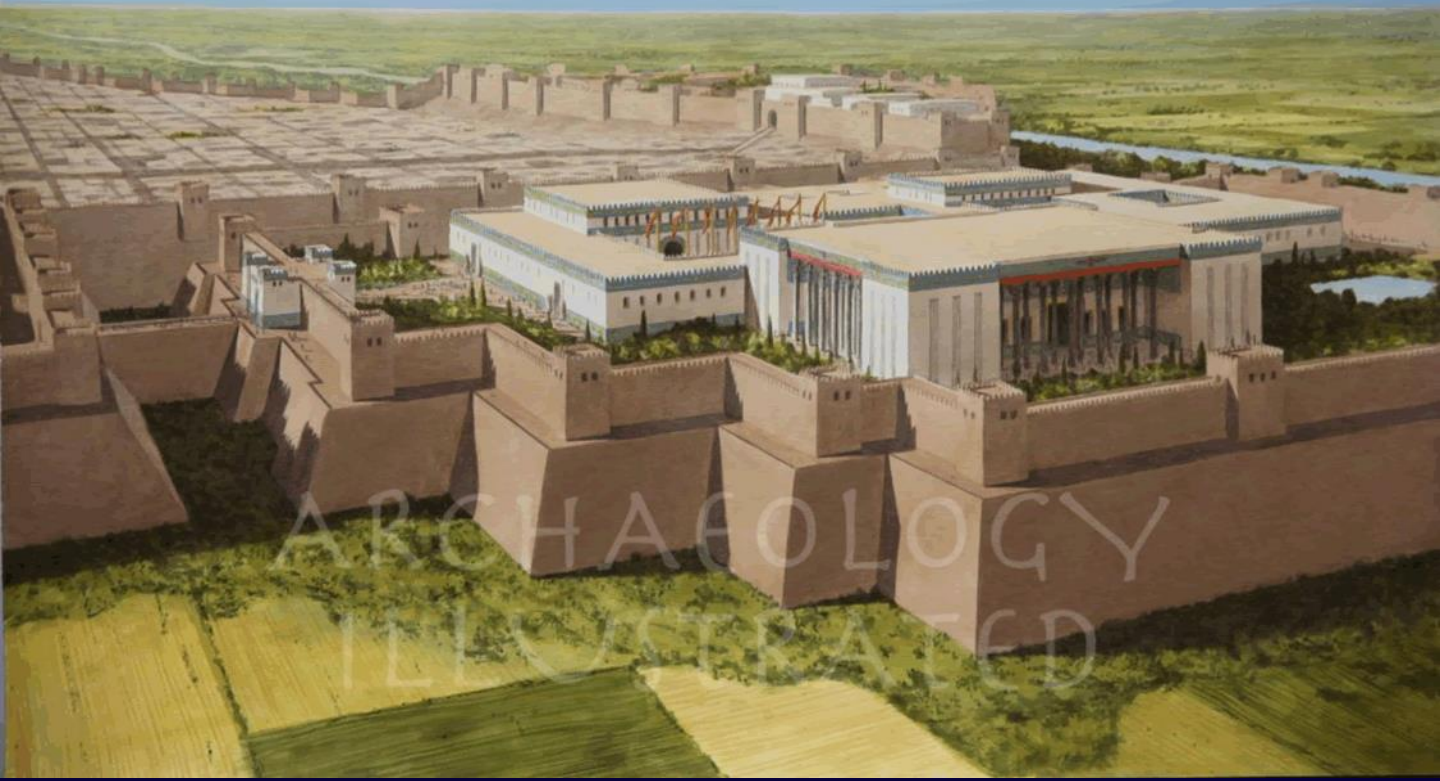
- For it must be noted, that men must either be caressed or annihilated; they will revenge themselves for small injuries, but cannot do so for great ones; **the injury therefore that we do to a man must be such that we need not fear his vengeance.**
- Moreover, a ruler or a prince must not mind incurring the charge of cruelty for the purpose of keeping his subjects united and faithful; for, with a very few examples, he will be more merciful than those who, from excess of tenderness, allow disorders to arise, from whence spring bloodshed and rapine....And of all princes, it is impossible for a new prince to escape the reputation of cruelty.



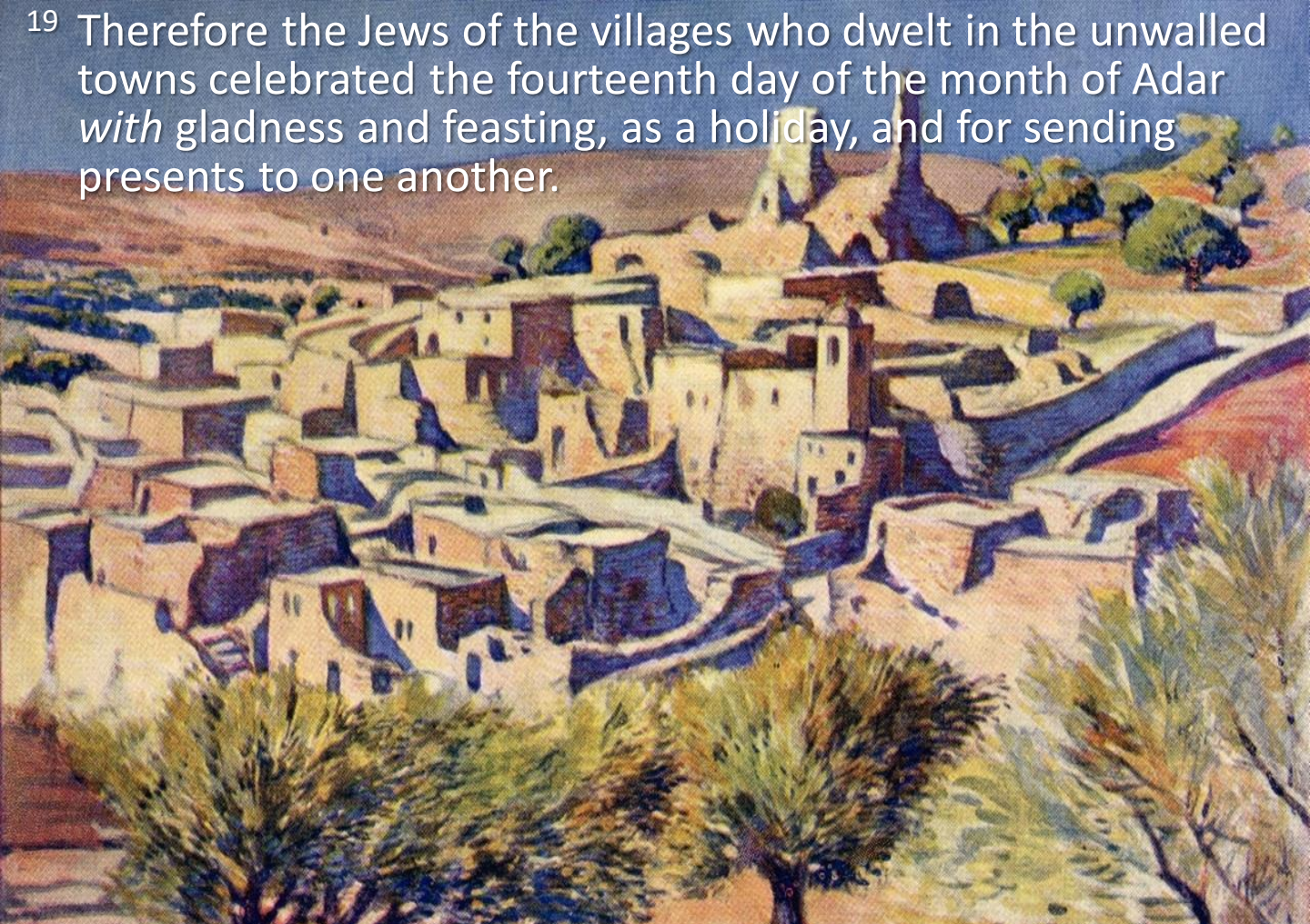
More Machiavelli

Strength attracts strength, and power attracts power. Thus the weak, to the degree they can make themselves seem strong, can attract the support of the strong, thereby becoming strong in reality.

18 But the Jews who *were* at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth *day*, as well as on the fourteenth; and on the fifteenth of *the month* they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.



¹⁹ Therefore the Jews of the villages who dwelt in the unwalled towns celebrated the fourteenth day of the month of Adar *with* gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and for sending presents to one another.



“Bethany” from *A Book of Modern Palestine* by Richard Penlake published c.1910.

²⁰ And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who *were* in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, ²¹ to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar, ²² 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; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor.



"The Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law" by Solomon Alexander Hart, 1850.

²³ So the Jews accepted the custom which they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them, ²⁴ because Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to annihilate them, and had cast Pur (that *is*, the lot), to consume them and destroy them; ...

²⁵ but when *Esther* came before the king, he commanded by letter that this wicked plot which *Haman* had devised against the Jews should return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.



²⁶ So 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 happened to them, ²⁷ the Jews established and imposed it upon themselves and their descendants and all who would join them, that without fail they should celebrate these two days every year, according to the written *instructions* and according to the *prescribed* time, ²⁸ *that* these days *should be* remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city, that these days of Purim should not fail *to be observed* among the Jews, and *that* the memory of them should not perish among their descendants.

HAPPY PURIM



PACHA
PURIM
ANEACH

"Happy Purim" by Shapiro.

²⁹ Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim.



"Esther and Mordecai Writing the Second Letter of Purim"
by Arent de Gelder, c. 1685

³⁰ And *Mordecai* sent letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, *with* words of peace and truth, ³¹ to confirm these days of Purim at their *appointed* time, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and their descendants concerning matters of their fasting and lamenting.



³² So the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.

מלכים ימלכו ורזנים יחקקו צדק: בי שריו
שרונדיבים כל שפט־ארץ: אני אוהבי אהו
משחרי ימצאנני: עשר־זכבוד אתי הון־עת
צדקה: טוב פריי מחרון ומפזותבואתי מכס
נבחר: באר־צדקה אהלך בתוך נתיבך
משפט: להנחיל אהבי יִשׁ ואצרתיהם אמלא
הזה קנני ראשית דרכו קדם מפעליו מא
מעולם נפכתי מראש מקדמי־ארץ: באי
ההמות חוללתי באין מעינות נכבדי־מים
בשרם הרים הטבעולפני גבעות חוללתי: עו
לא עשה ארץ וחוצות וראש עפרות תבל
נחבינו שמים שם אני בחקו חוג־על־פני תהו
נאמנו שחקים ממעל בעוז עינות תהום

ה תדיחנו: הולך אחריה פתאם
ח יבאו־עכס אל־מוסר אויל: עד
וכמהר צפור אל־פחול־אידעני
ועתה בנים שמעו־לי והקשיבו
ל־ישׁט אל־דרכיה לבך ו־א־תתע
ג־רבים חללים הפילה ועצמים
דרכי שאול ביתה יורדות אל־
חדרי־מות:
ה תקרא ותבונה תתן קולה:
ש־מרמים עלי־דרך בית נתיבת
זערים לפי־קרת מבוא פתחים
א־ישים אקרא וקולי־א־בני אדם:
ערמהוכסילים הבינולב: שמעו

Esther



NEXT WEEK: SOMETHING(S) HIDDEN