

Greek Esther

Revising Mordecai: Greek Additions A and F

Addition A

² In the second year of the reign of Ahasuerus the Great, on the first day of Nisan, Mordecai son of Jair son of Shimei son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, had a dream. ³ He was a Jew living in the city of Susa, a great man, serving in the court of the king. ⁴ He was one of the captives whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had brought from Jerusalem with King Jeconiah of Judah. And this was his dream: ⁵ Noises and confusion, thunders and earthquake, tumult on the earth! ⁶ Then two great dragons came forward, both ready to fight, and they roared terribly. ⁷ At their roaring every nation prepared for war, to fight against the righteous nation. ⁸ It was a day of darkness and gloom, of tribulation and distress, affliction and great tumult on the earth! ⁹ And the whole righteous nation was troubled; they feared the evils that threatened them, and were ready to perish. ¹⁰ Then they cried out to God; and at their outcry, as though from a tiny spring, there came a great river, with abundant water; ¹¹ light came, and the sun rose, and the lowly were exalted and devoured those held in honor.

¹² Mordecai saw in this dream what God had determined to do, and after he awoke he had it on his mind, seeking all day to understand it in every detail.

Addition F

⁴ And Mordecai said, “These things have come from God; ⁵ for I remember the dream that I had concerning these matters, and none of them has failed to be fulfilled. ⁶ There was the little spring that became a river, and there was light and sun and abundant water—the river is Esther, whom the king married and made queen. ⁷ The two dragons are Haman and myself. ⁸ The nations are those that gathered to destroy the name of the Jews. ⁹ And my nation, this is Israel, who cried out to God and was saved. The Lord has saved his people; the Lord has rescued us from all these evils; God has done great signs and wonders, wonders that have never happened among the nations. ¹⁰ For this purpose he made two lots, one for the people of God and one for all the nations, ¹¹ and these two lots came to the hour and moment and day of decision before God and among all the nations. ¹² And God remembered his people and vindicated his inheritance. ¹³ So they will observe these days in the month of Adar, on the fourteenth and fifteenth of that month, with an assembly and joy and gladness before God, from generation to generation forever among his people Israel.”

Revising Esther: The Prayer in Greek Esther Addition C

⁸ Then Mordecai prayed to the Lord, calling to remembrance all the works of the Lord. ⁹ He said, “O Lord, Lord, you rule as King over all things, for the universe is in your power and there is no one who can oppose you when it is your will to save Israel, ¹⁰ for you have made heaven and earth and every wonderful thing under heaven. ¹¹ You are Lord of all, and there is no one who can resist you, the Lord. ¹² You know all things; you know, O Lord, that it was not in insolence or pride or for any love of glory that I did this, and refused to bow down to this proud Haman; ¹³ for I would have been willing to kiss the soles of his feet to save Israel! ¹⁴ But I did this so that I might not set human glory above the glory of God, and I will not bow down to anyone but you, who are my Lord; and I will not do these things in pride. ¹⁵ And now, O Lord God and King, God of Abraham, spare your people....

¹ Then Queen Esther, seized with deadly anxiety, fled to the Lord. ² She took off her splendid apparel and put on the garments of distress and mourning, and instead of costly perfumes she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she utterly humbled her body; every part that she loved to adorn she covered with her tangled hair. ³ She prayed to the Lord God of Israel, and said: “O my Lord, you only are our king; help me, who am alone and have no helper but you, ⁴ for my danger is in my hand. ⁵ Ever since I was born I have heard in the tribe of my family that you, O Lord, took Israel out of all the nations, and our ancestors from among all their forebears, for an everlasting inheritance, and that you did for them all that you promised. ⁶ And now we have sinned before you, and you have handed us over to our enemies ⁷ because we glorified their gods. You are righteous, O Lord! ⁸ And now they are not satisfied that we are in bitter slavery, but they have covenanted with their idols ⁹ to abolish what your mouth has ordained, and to destroy your inheritance, to stop the mouths of those who praise you and to quench your altar and the glory of your house, ¹⁰ to open the mouths of the nations for the praise of vain idols, and to magnify forever a mortal king.

¹¹ “O Lord, do not surrender your scepter to what has no being; and do not let them laugh at our downfall; but turn their plan against them, and make an example of him who began this against us. ¹² Remember, O Lord; make yourself known in this time of our affliction, and give me courage, O King of the gods and Master of all dominion! ¹³ Put eloquent speech in my mouth before the lion, and turn his heart to hate the man who is fighting against us, so that there may be an end of him and those who agree with him. ¹⁴ But save us by your hand, and help me, who am alone and have no helper but you, O Lord. ¹⁵ You have knowledge of all things, and you know that I hate the splendor of the wicked and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of any alien. ¹⁶ You know my necessity—that I abhor the sign of my proud position, which is upon my head on days when I appear in public. I abhor it like a filthy rag, and I do not wear it on the days when I am at leisure. ¹⁷ And your servant has not eaten at Haman’s table, and I have not honored the king’s feast or drunk the wine of libations. ¹⁸ Your servant has had no joy since the day that I was brought here until now, except in you, O Lord God of Abraham. ¹⁹ O God, whose might is over all, hear the voice of the despairing, and save us from the hands of evildoers. And save me from my fear!”

Addition D

¹ On the third day, when she had finished praying, she removed her mourning clothes and put on her royal robes. ² Calling on the all-seeing God and savior, she appeared in full view of the court. She took along with her two female servants, ³ delicately leaning on the one, ⁴ while the other followed behind, carrying her train.

⁵ She was blushing in the full bloom of her beauty, and her face was delightfully cheerful, but her heart was tense with fear. ⁶ When she had passed through all the doors, she stood in the presence of the king. He was seated on his royal throne, clothed in all his majesty—all in gold and precious stones—and was terrifying. ⁷ He lifted his face, which blazed gloriously, about to explode in anger, and looked at her. The queen collapsed. Her color turned pale, and she fell face forward onto the female servant who was walking ahead of her.

⁸ Then God changed the king's spirit to tenderness. He leaped anxiously from his throne, and took her up in his arms until she was calm. He tried to comfort her with reassuring words, ⁹ saying to her: "What is it, Esther? I'm your brother. Take heart!" ¹⁰ You won't die, for the order only holds for ordinary people. ¹¹ Come with me!" ¹² He then lifted his gold scepter and placed it on her neck. He embraced her and said: "Speak to me." ¹³ She said to him, "I saw you, Master, as if you were one of God's angels, and my heart was struck with terror at the sight of your glory. ¹⁴ You inspire awe, Master, and your face is full of divine grace." ¹⁵ But while she was speaking, she collapsed again. The king was distressed, and all his servants tried to comfort her.

Tintoretto (Venice, 1518-1594), Esther before Ahasuerus (1547-1548)



Esther 2:19-23 in the Hebrew and Greek versions

¹⁹ Meanwhile, Mordecai was working for the king in the court. ²⁰ Esther still wasn't telling anyone her family background and race. As Mordecai had ordered her, she continued to worship God and obey God's commands just as when she was in his care. Esther didn't change the way she lived. ²¹ But two eunuchs, the king's two main bodyguards, became very upset because Mordecai was promoted. They secretly planned to kill King Artaxerxes. ²² When Mordecai got wind of it, he reported it to Esther, who spoke to the king about the plan. ²³ The king questioned the two men and hanged them. Then the king ordered a record of the event to be placed in the royal archive to remember Mordecai's loyalty.

יט ובהקבץ בתולות שנית ומרדכי ישב בשער-המלך.
כ אין אסתר מגדת מולדתה ואת-עמה כאשר צוה
עליה מרדכי ואת-מאמר מרדכי אסתר עשה כאשר
היתה באמנה אתו.

כא בימים ההם ומרדכי יושב בשער-המלך קצף בגתו
ותרש שני-סריסי המלך משמרי הסף ויבקשו לשלח
יד במלך אחשוורוש. כב ויודע הדבר למרדכי ויגד
לאסתר המלכה ותאמר אסתר למלך בשם מרדכי.

כג ויבקש הדבר וימצא ויתלו שניהם על-עץ ויכתבו
בספר דברי הימים לפני המלך.

Esther 6:1 in the Hebrew and Greek versions

¹ But the Lord kept sleep from the king that night, and he told his teacher to bring the written daily annals, to read to him.

א בלילה ההוא נדדה שנת המלך ויאמר להביא את-
ספר הזכרונות דברי הימים ויהיו נקראים לפני המלך.

Esther 6:13 in the Hebrew and Greek versions

¹³ Haman told his wife Zeresh and his friends about everything that had happened to him. Both his friends and his wife said to him, "You've begun to lose face to Mordecai. If Mordecai belongs to the Judean people, and you've been humiliated before him, you will indeed fall. You will never be able to hold your own against him, because the living God is with him."

יג ויספר המן לזרש אשתו ולכל-אהביו את כל-אשר
קרהו ויאמרו לו חכמיו וזרש אשתו אם מזרע
היהודים מרדכי אשר החלות לנפל לפניו לא-תוכל לו
כי-נפול תפול לפניו.