

16 Meanwhile, the remainder of the Jews who were in the king's provinces also assembled to protect themselves and get relief from their enemies. They killed seventy-five thousand of them but did not lay their hands on the plunder.

17 This happened on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.

18 The Jews in Susa, however, had assembled on the thirteenth and fourteenth, and then on the fifteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.

19 That is why rural Jews--those living in villages--observe the fourteenth of the month of Adar as a day of joy and feasting, a day for giving presents to each other.

20 **Mordecai** recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of **King Ahasuerus**, near and far, 21 to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar

22 as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

23 So the Jews agreed to continue the celebration they had begun, doing what **Mordecai** had written to them.

24 For **Haman** son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them and

had cast the pur (that is, the lot) for their ruin and destruction.

25 But when the plot came to the king's attention, he issued written orders that the evil scheme **Haman** had devised against the Jews should come back onto his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

26 (Therefore these days were called Purim, from the word pur.) Because of everything written in this letter and because of what they had seen and what had happened to them,

27 the Jews took it upon themselves to establish the custom that they and their descendants and all who join them should without fail observe these two days every year, in the way prescribed and at the time appointed.

28 These days should be remembered and observed in every generation by every family, and in every province and in every city. And these days of Purim should never cease to be celebrated by the Jews, nor should the memory of them die out among their descendants.

29 So **Queen Esther**, daughter of Abihail, along with **Mordecai** the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter concerning Purim.

30 And **Mordecai** sent letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of **Ahasuerus**--words of goodwill and assurance--

31 to establish these days of Purim at their designated times, as **Mordecai** the Jew and **Queen Esther** had decreed for them, and as they had established for themselves and their

descendants in regard to their times of fasting and lamentation.

32 **Esther's** decree confirmed these regulations about Purim, and it was written down in the records.

10:1 **King Ahasuerus** imposed tribute throughout the empire, to its distant shores.

2 And all his acts of power and might, together with a full account of the greatness of **Mordecai** to which the king had raised him, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Media and Persia?

3 **Mordecai** the Jew was second in rank to **King Ahasuerus**, preeminent among the Jews, and held in high esteem by his many fellow Jews, because he worked for the good of his people and spoke up for the welfare of all the Jews.

