

Hello and here's more info for our study of Esther Saturday morning -

- I. I'm new at scheduling ZOOM meetings and it seems I scheduled our Torah study for 10:30 PM! Instead of AM. My apologies. Below is the revised meeting invitation. The first 15 minutes of the meeting will be used for people who are new to ZOOM. You will be asked to download the program, and you need to make sure your microphone and camera are enabled. If you don't have a camera, that's fine; it just means your pretty face won't be visible to the rest of us. If you have never used Zoom before, try to get started a few minutes early to get ZOOM downloaded, and I'll spend the first 15 minutes trying to work out glitches.

- II. Have the text of Esther in front of you. Below are links to Esther.
SEFARIA (Esther in Hebrew and English) -
<https://www.sefaria.org/Esther.1?lang=bi>

New International Version (English)
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Esther+1&version=NIV>

- III. Below are some of the key sections of Esther, as well as info that would be in my usual Handout. I will be able to share it as we are in the meeting, but it would be good if you have it handy.

I look forward to seeing you (virtually) at our ZOOM Study of ESTHER. Thanks for trying this. It doesn't come with bagels and donuts, but you can be part of it in your pajamas at home. Shabbat shalom.

David

ZOOM MEETING INVITATION FOR STUDY OF ESTHER

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 10:30 AM

Topic: Torah Study on the Book of Esther

Time: Mar 14, 2020 10:30 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/5616434766>

Meeting ID: 561 643 4766

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THE REAL STORY OF ESTHER

Esther as Diaspora Story: it promotes pride in Jewish identity, and solidarity within the Jewish community and with Jewish tradition. Jews are part of new community and at home in it, but not secure. “The Book of Esther affirms that all is right with the world and with the place of the Jews in it.”
Adele Berlin

Esther as Comedy: A comic story for a carnivalesque holiday. It is itself a ‘shpiel’ of sorts. Purim comes at the same time of year as numerous ancient carnivals as the new year approached with Nissan.

Esther as Farce: a type of comedy designed to provoke the audience to simple, hearty laughter....To do so farce employs highly exaggerated or caricatured character types, puts them into impossible and ludicrous situations, and makes free use of broad verbal humor and physical horseplay.

Esther as Burlesque: “an artistic composition that, for the sake of laughter, vulgarizes lofty Material or treats ordinary material with mock dignity.”
Esther vulgarizes the workings of the Persian empire and court

Not Satire: purpose of satire is to criticize; the purpose of Esther is comedy and **catharsis** for Jews

Language: lots of exaggeration, especially of numbers. Also, great generalizations of ‘all’ the people, husbands, Jews, etc. Frequent repetition of key words, and dyadic expressions. Idiom is Late Biblical Hebrew, with many archaism to harken back to earlier books such as Samuel, Kings, and Genesis. It is meant to sound quasi-Biblical, like a historical novel.

HISTORY

539 BCE: Persian period begins when Cyrus conquers Babylon.

525 BCE: Persia reaches greatest extent: Media, Lydia, Babylonia, and Egypt

522-486 BCE: Conflicts with Greece escalate under Darius who put down rebellions in Babylon by force, taking the god of Marduk from the temple.

486-465 BCE: Xerxes ushers in Persian decline and loss of territory

Xerxes = *xshayarsha* = Ahashverosh

400-200 BCE: Esther written. (likely by 300 after Xerxes reign but before Hellenization.

330 BCE: Persian period ends with death of Darius III, after defeat by Alexander.

200 BCE: Esther accepted as part of cannon. Some argue for later date based on language in Talmud.

Knowledge of Jewish life in Achaemenid Persian period is very limited. We know almost nothing about the Jews of Susa. Persians respected local laws, religions, and languages, and allowed ethnic group a good amount of local control and rule.

ORIGINS:

The only information we have about the origins of Purim are in the Esther story, but it is clearly a comedy about an earlier event and an already existing holiday, and we just don't know.

Babylonian and Persian years ended in Adar. Babylonian festivals that celebrated Marduk and Ishtar, very reminiscent of Mordechai and Esther.

Purim was likely celebrated by **300 BCE**, but there is no evidence other than when Esther was likely written. There is clear evidence for Purim in Hellenistic times, and the "day of Mordecai" on 14 Adar is mentioned in Second Maccabees. By around 115 BCE, Purim celebrated in Israel and Egypt, but not in Qumran. Essenes rejected it. By Roman period, Purim is firmly established in all Jewish communities. However, it isn't until this time that it is consistently called "Purim". In Greek versions, there are several names starting with "P", and Maccabees uses "Day of Mordechai."

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

ESTHER - from Ishtar, Babylonian goddess (Astarte in Bible)

II KINGS 23:13 - The king also defiled the shrines facing Jerusalem, to the south of the Mount of the Destroyer, which King Solomon of Israel had built for Ashtoreth, the abomination of the Sidonians

וְאֶת־הַבָּמֹת אֲשֶׁר ׀ עַל־פְּנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר ׀ מִיַּמִּין לְהַר־הַמְּשֻׁחֵית אֲשֶׁר ׀ כָּבְדָה שְׁלֹמֹה
מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹתָת ׀ שִׁקָּץ צִדוֹנִים

PSALM 22 - For the leader; on ayyeleth ha-shaḥar. A psalm of David.

RASHI on PSALM 22 – Ayelet haShachar- the name of a musical instrument played in Temple; our rabbis claim this is Esther,

MORDECHAI - based on Marduk, the chief God of Babylon

ESTHER 2:5 – 6 (*first line in Megillah that is chanted by everyone publicly*) In the fortress Shushan lived a Jew by the name of Mordecai, son of Jair son of Shimei son of Kish, a Benjaminite.[Kish] had been exiled from Jerusalem in the group that was carried into exile along with King Jeconiah of Judah, which had been driven into exile by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.—

- **MORDECHAI WAS AN EXEMPLARY PIOUS JEW AND MEMBER OF SANHEDRIN-**

TALMUD MENACHOT 65a – (Petachya was Mordechai's Hebrew name)
Gemara asks: What was unique about Petachya? All of the members of the Sanhedrin also know all seventy languages.... they must know all seventy languages in order that the Sanhedrin will not need to hear testimony from the mouth of a translator in a case where a witness speaks a different language.
(*Rabbi Yohanon in Talmud Megillah teaches that Mordechai understood the plot against the king because he understood Bigtan and Teresh's rare Tarsian language.*)

GENESIS RABBA 30:8 – *Mordecha supported/raised her....* Rabbi Yudan said once, Mordechai looked for any wetnurse for Esther, but couldn't find one, so he nursed her. Rabbi Berch'ya and Rabbi Abahu in the name of Rabi Eliezer said 'milk came to him to nurse.'

-MORDECHAI WAS PART OF REBUILDING ISRAEL

Using geneology in 2:5-6, argues Mordechai's great grandfather was exiled, but then Mordechai, as a young man, returned to Israel with Ezra (see below), and only in old age returned to Persia to help that community and encourage their identity.

EZRA 2:2/ NEHEMIAH 7:7 - These are the people of the province who came up from among the captive exiles whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried into exile to Babylon, who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own city, who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, **Mordecai**, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah: The list of the men of the people of Israel:

אֲשֶׁר־בָּאוּ עִם־זְרֻבָּבֶל יְשׁוּעַ נְחֶמְיָה שָׁרְיָה רְעֵלְיָה מְרֹדֶכַי בִּלְשָׁן מִסְפָּר בְּגוּי רְחוּם בַּעֲנָה
מִסְפָּר אֲנָשֵׁי עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל: (ס)

KEY TEXTS FROM BOOK OF ESTHER

CHAPTER 1: QUEEN VASHTI

⁴For a full 180 days he displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty. ⁵When these days were over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days, in the enclosed garden of the king's palace, for all the people from the least to the greatest who were in the citadel of Susa. ⁶The garden had hangings of white and blue linen, fastened with cords of white linen and purple material to silver rings on marble pillars. There were couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and other costly stones. ⁷Wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other, and the royal wine was abundant, in keeping with the king's liberality. ⁸By the king's command each guest was allowed to drink with no restrictions, for the king instructed all the wine stewards to serve each man what he wished.

⁹Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes.

¹⁰On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, he commanded the seven eunuchs who served him—Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Karkas— ¹¹to bring before him Queen Vashti, wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at. ¹²But when the attendants delivered the king's command, Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger.

¹³Since it was customary for the king to consult experts in matters of law and justice, he spoke with the wise men who understood the times ¹⁴and were closest to the king—Karshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memukan, the seven nobles of Persia and Media who had special access to the king and were highest in the kingdom.

¹⁵"According to law, what must be done to Queen Vashti?" he asked. "She has not obeyed the command of King Xerxes that the eunuchs have taken to her."

¹⁶Then Memukan replied in the presence of the king and the nobles, "Queen Vashti has done wrong, not only against the king but also against all the nobles and the peoples of all the provinces of King Xerxes. ¹⁷For the queen's conduct will become known to all the women, and so they will despise their husbands and say, 'King Xerxes commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, but she would not come.' ¹⁸This very day the Persian and Median women of the nobility who have heard about the queen's conduct will respond to all the king's nobles in the same way. There will be no end of disrespect and discord.

¹⁹“Therefore, if it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be repealed, that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of King Xerxes. Also let the king give her royal position to someone else who is better than she. ²⁰Then when the king’s edict is proclaimed throughout all his vast realm, all the women will respect their husbands, from the least to the greatest.”

CHAPTER 2: MORDECHAI RAISES HADASSAH/ESTHER

⁵Now there was in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, ⁶who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, among those taken captive with Jehoiachin^[a] king of Judah. ⁷Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died.

CHAPTER 3: ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE DECREE AGAINST THE JEWS OF PERSIA

3 After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. ²All the royal officials at the king’s gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.

³Then the royal officials at the king’s gate asked Mordecai, “Why do you disobey the king’s command?” ⁴Day after day they spoke to him but he refused to comply. Therefore they told Haman about it to see whether Mordecai’s behavior would be tolerated, for he had told them he was a Jew.

⁵When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged. ⁶Yet having learned who Mordecai’s people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai’s people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

⁷In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, the *pur* (that is, the lot) was cast in the presence of Haman to select a day and month. And the lot fell on^[a] the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

⁸Then Haman said to King Xerxes, “There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep

themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. ⁹If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents^[b] of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury."

CHAPTER 4: MORDECHAI'S WORDS TO ESTHER

⁹Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. ¹⁰Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, ¹¹"All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

¹²When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, ¹³he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. ¹⁴For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

¹⁵Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶"Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

CHAPTER 6: MORDECHA IS HONORED

⁶When Haman entered, the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?" ⁷So he answered the king, "For the man the king delights to honor, ⁸have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. ⁹Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!'"

¹⁰“Go at once,” the king commanded Haman. “Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king’s gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended.”

¹¹So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, “This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!”

¹²Afterward Mordecai returned to the king’s gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief, ¹³and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him.

CHAPTER 7: THE FARCE REACHES ITS PEAK

7 So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther’s banquet, ²and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, “Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.”

³Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. ⁴For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king.^[a]”

⁵King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, “Who is he? Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?”

⁶Esther said, “An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!”

Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. ⁷The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life.

⁸Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining.

The king exclaimed, “Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?”

As soon as the word left the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face. ⁹Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, “A pole reaching to a height of fifty cubits^[b] stands by Haman’s house. He had it set up for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king.”

The king said, “Impale him on it!” ¹⁰So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai. Then the king’s fury subsided.

CHAPTER 8 THE JEWS REJOICE

¹The king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill and annihilate the armed men of any nationality or province who might attack them and their women and children,^[b] and to plunder the property of their enemies. ¹²The day appointed for the Jews to do this in all the provinces of King Xerxes was the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. ¹³A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

¹⁴The couriers, riding the royal horses, went out, spurred on by the king's command, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa.

¹⁵When Mordecai left the king's presence, he was wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large crown of gold and a purple robe of fine linen. And the city of Susa held a joyous celebration. ¹⁶For the Jews it was a time of happiness and joy, gladness and honor. ¹⁷In every province and in every city to which the edict of the king came, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating. And many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them.

CHAPTER 9: THE REVENGE FANTASY

9 On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them. ²The Jews assembled in their cities in all the provinces of King Xerxes to attack those determined to destroy them. No one could stand against them, because the people of all the other nationalities were afraid of them. ³And all the nobles of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and the king's administrators helped the Jews, because fear of Mordecai had seized them. ⁴Mordecai was prominent in the palace; his reputation spread throughout the provinces, and he became more and more powerful.

⁵The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and they did what they pleased to those who hated them. ⁶In the citadel of Susa, the Jews killed and destroyed **five hundred men**. ⁷They also killed **Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, ⁸Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, ⁹Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizatha, ¹⁰the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha**, the enemy of the Jews. But they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

¹¹The number of those killed in the citadel of Susa was reported to the king that same day. ¹²The king said to Queen Esther, “The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman in the citadel of Susa. What have they done in the rest of the king’s provinces? Now what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? It will also be granted.”

¹³“If it pleases the king,” Esther answered, “give the Jews in Susa permission to carry out this day’s edict tomorrow also, and let Haman’s ten sons be impaled on poles.”

¹⁴So the king commanded that this be done. An edict was issued in Susa, and they impaled the ten sons of Haman. ¹⁵The Jews in Susa came together on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and they put to death in Susa **three hundred men**, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

¹⁶Meanwhile, 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. ¹⁷This 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.

¹⁸The 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.

¹⁹That 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.

NOTES

1:2 **Shushan.** Susa, Persia's administrative capital. Upper city with palace/fort; lower city across large canal where people lived. Esther discusses both. Jews rebel in lower city and palace.

1:8 **No restrictions!** **Herodotus:** "They are extremely fond of wine, and they are not supposed to vomit or urinate when anyone else can see. Although they have to be careful about all that, it is usual for them to be drunk when they are debating the most important issues. However, any decision they reach is put to them again on the next day, when they are sober, by the head of the household.

Plutarch: The lawful wives of Persi. an kings sit beside them at dinner, and eat with them, but when the kings wish to be merry and get drunk, they send their wives out and send for their dancing girls and concubines." That's why Vashti has a 'women's feast'

1:11 **Royal diadem:** "keter" late Hebrew, in Bible only in Esther. Dentate crowns.

2:1 **Sometime afterward.....** (according to the date in 2:16, four years have passed since the Vashti incident.

2:5 **Mordechai:** a common Jewish name in Babylonia, based on Marduk, but Jews took names of the nations they lived in, as the Maccabees did.

2:6 **exile:** with King Hehoiachin in 597 BCE (2 Kings 24:6ff)

If so, he'd be 116 during setting of Esther. More likely his status in Diaspora is solidified by his being part of the exile. WE see this also in Daniel and Tobit, other Diaspora heroes.

2:12 **'to go to'** sexual: compare 2 Sam 11:4, Ruth 4:13

2:21 **sitting in the palace gate-** an official position as an administrator of the court, whose offices were in the elaborate gate area. It seems Mordechai could be on of the King's Eye's, or secret police.

3:1 **Some time afterward** – here, in 3:12, five years since Esther became queen

3:1 **The Agagite** - a descendant of Amalek and Agag, I Sam 15:8

3:2 **bowed low** *proskynesis*, bowing before a Persian monarch, which in Greek "propaganda" was a low prostration, though actual Persia art shows a slight

bow. It was a frequent subject of Greek derision, since in Greece, Kings did not get that deference, but operated as chief among equal citizens. However, Jews from Jerusalem should be familiar, as it is part of our religious practice. So why didn't Mordechai bow? Jews can bow. Originally, it would seem it is about Haman, who he knew had been part of the plot against the king (one of the Greek versions), or because he knows Haman is an Amalekite. Still, it is a Greek refusal translated into Jewish terms. By, in rabbinic literature, it became about bowing before anyone but God

- 3:4 **Jew:** While clearly the listeners related to the anti-Semitism here, it is very unlikely that in Persia, the issue was religion. Rather, it would have been an ethnic issue of stereotypes of certain ethnicities.
- 3:5 **filled with rage .** Haman is narcissistic and hypersensitive to insults to his pride and status. See also: 5:9
- 3:7 **pur** Akkadian, casting small stone die (Umim and Thumim in Jewish Temple practice). Word not found in Bible outside Esther (usually 'goral'). Persians were reputed, like most in that area, to use these dice for divination.
3. 8 **There is a certain people.....** Haman's accusation has three parts: 1: Jews are a people scattered. This is true. 2) Jewish law differs from other people (largely true but not as relates to loyalty to Persian king, and 3)do not obey the king's laws (untrue). Classic propaganda method.
- 3: 8 **to tolerate them.....** This could also mean 'give them a remission of taxes' and then offers silver to make up for loss
- 3:9 **10,000 talents of silver...** 333 tons of silver, equal to annual tribute of entire Persian empire. An exaggeration obvious to those there; yet, Esther inherits Haman's wealth in the end.
- 3: 15 **The king and Haman sat down to feast, but he city of Shushan was dumbfounded.** Palace city verses 'civilian' city across the canal. Also parallels how the lower city later celebrates with the Jews.
- 4: 13 **Do not imagine that you, of all the Jews.....your father's house will perish.** Powerful sentence, and lesson, and reflects the great fear of those in exile- that their line will perish. This is a line spoken to the reader or listener.

- 5: 1 **Esther put on royal apparel...** This is mythical motif in the ANE, and very much like Judith preparing to go to Holofernes, and in the Sumerian Courtship of Inanna and Dumuzi
- 5:14 **50 cubits high** about 20 meters, or a seven-story building. Comic.
- 6: 7 **For the man whom the king desires to honor...** Evocative of Joseph being honored by Pharaoh in Gen 41: 41-43. "And removing his signet ring from his hand, Pharaoh put it on Joseph's hand; and he had him dressed in robes of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck. He had him ride in the chariot of his second-in-command, and they cried before him "Abrek!"
- 6: 8 **royal garb which the king has worn...** this is outrageous, tantamount for asking for the kingship, since the king's clothes are part of his kingship. According to Greek writers, it was forbidden for anyone to wear the king's robe and there are stories about this as a sign of a madman.
- 6:12 **covered his head in mourning.** Midrash tells that Haman's daughter thought her father was Mordechai leading the horse, and poured her chamber pot on his head. When she saw it was her father, she fell off the roof and died. Pouring a chamber pot on the head is part of common comic motifs, including Sophocles.
- 7:4 **destroyed, massacred and exterminated...** Same three words as in Haman's edict in 3:13