

## Book Study on Esther

### The Feast of Purim

#### Esther 9:20-32

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## Introduction

- Review books of the Bible: Genesis – Esther
- Last time we ended with the Jews defending themselves against their enemies. Over 75,000 enemies of the Jews are killed by the Jews.

## Let's pick up here in chapter 9 and verse 20

### Lets look a little deeper into these verses:

*Est 9:20 And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far,*

- It has been supposed that thus far that part of the book of Esther, which was written by Mordecai extends: what follows to the end, was probably added either by Ezra, or the men of the Great Synagogue; though what is said here may refer only to the letters sent by Mordecai to the Jews of the provinces. From this to the end of the chapter is nothing else than a recapitulation of the chief heads of the preceding history, and an account of the appointment of an annual feast, called the feast of Purim, in commemoration of their providential deliverance from the malice of Haman.<sup>1</sup>

*Est 9:21 To stablish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly,*

- By a law, that they should yearly on those two days rest, and repeat among themselves that signal deliverance, propagating the remembrance of it to all posterity. Mordecai well knew that eaten bread is soon forgotten, that deliverances are usually but nine days' wonderment, that it is easy and ordinary with people to rob God and wrong themselves by their unthankfulness, which forfeiteth former mercies and forestalleth future, he therefore settleth it upon them, saith the text, statuendo eis ut facerent, he exacteth it of them by virtue of his office.<sup>2</sup>
- as the former had been observed by the Jews in the provinces, and both by those in Shushan, Esther 9:17 as festivals in commemoration of their great deliverance; hence the fourteenth of Adar is called the day of Mordecai, being established by

<sup>1</sup> Clarke, Adam. "Commentary on Esther 9:20". "The Adam Clarke Commentary". 1832.

<sup>2</sup> Trapp, John. "Commentary on Esther 9:21". John Trapp Complete Commentary.. 1865-1868.

him;"And they ordained all with a common decree in no case to let that day pass without solemnity, but to celebrate the thirtieth day of the twelfth month, which in the Syrian tongue is called Adar, the day before Mardocheus' day.' (2 Maccabees 15:36)<sup>3</sup>

*Est 9:22 As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.*

- As the days wherein the Jews rested — They did not keep the days on which they fought, but those on which they rested. On the fourteenth day the country Jews rested, and on the fifteenth those in Shushan, and these days they kept.<sup>4</sup>
- alms money, as the Targum, to purchase food and drink with, nor may they use it to any other purpose; though some say they may do what they will with it<sup>F16</sup>; and a man must not give less than two gifts to the poor; these are called the monies of Purim<sup>F17</sup>.<sup>3</sup>

*Est 9:23 And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them;*

- They had already kept the fifteenth day, and some of them in the country the fourteenth also, as a day of rejoicing: Mordecai wrote to them to bind themselves and their successors, and all their proselytes, to celebrate this as an annual feast throughout all their generations; and this they undertook to do. And it has been observed among them, in all places of their dispersion, from that day to the present time, without any interruption.<sup>1</sup>
- They had begun, as Esther 9:22 tells us, by keeping both days, and Mordochai wrote to them that they should make this an annual custom. This they agreed to do in consequence of Mordochai's letters.<sup>5</sup>

*Est 9:24 Because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them;*

- Pur, that is, the lot] See on Esther 3:7.<sup>6</sup>
- Haman had, by lot, determined this to be the time of the Jews' destruction; but the Lord, at whose disposal the lot is, had determined it to be the time of their triumph.

<sup>3</sup> Gill, John. "Commentary on Esther 9:21". "The New John Gill Exposition of the Entire Bible". 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Benson, Joseph. "Commentary on Esther 9:22". Joseph Benson's Commentary. 1857.

<sup>5</sup> Keil, Carl Friedrich & Delitzsch, Franz. "Commentary on Esther 9:23". 1854-1889.

<sup>6</sup> The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

The name of this festival, therefore, would remind them of the sovereign dominion of the God of Israel, who served his own purposes by the foolish superstitions of the heathen, and outwitted the monthly prognosticators in their craft, Isaiah 47:14, frustrating the tokens of the liars, and making the diviners mad, Isaiah 44:26.<sup>4</sup>

*Est 9:25 But when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.*

- Haman was hanged before on the twenty third day of the month, but his sons not till the fourteenth day of the twelfth month; Esther 7:10.<sup>3</sup>
- His plan was to hang Mordecai right after his reciting of the shema<sup>7</sup>
- Haman was hanged on the second day of the Passover feast<sup>7</sup>

*Est 9:26 Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. Therefore for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them,*

- That is from pari, the lot; because, as we have seen, Haman cast lots to find what month, and what day of the month, would be the most favorable for the accomplishment of his bloody designs against the Jews. See on Esther 3:7; (note).<sup>1</sup>

*Est 9:27 The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year;*

- That is, the Gentile proselytes, who were obliged to submit to other of the Jewish laws, and therefore to this also; the rather, because they enjoyed the benefit of this day's deliverance, without which the Jewish nation and religion had been in a great measure, if not wholly, extinct in the world.<sup>4</sup>

*Est 9:28 And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.*

- And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and these days of Purim are not to pass away among the Jews, nor their remembrance to cease among their seed. The participles נזכרים ונעשים still depend on להיות , Esther 9:27. Not till the last clause does the construction change in להיות לא to the temp. finit. יעבור ולא is a periphrasis of the adverb: imperishably, inviolably. בכתבם , secundum scriptum eorum , i.e., as

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7124-haman-the-agagite>

Mordochai had written concerning them (Esther 9:23). בַּזְמַנִּים , as he had appointed their time. הַיָּמִים , to come to an end from, i.e., to cease among their descendants.<sup>5</sup>

- That these days... should not fail,... nor the memorial of them perish. As a commemoration of human, and not of Divine, appointment, the feast of Purim was liable to abrogation or discontinuance. The Jews of the time resolved that the observance should be perpetual; and in point of fact the feast has continued up to the present date, and is likely to continue, though they could not bind their successors.<sup>8</sup>

*Est 9:29 Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim.*

- Mordecai's first letter Esther 9:20 was to some extent tentative, a recommendation. The Jews generally having accepted the recommendation Esther 9:23, Esther 9:27, he and Esther now wrote a second letter which was mandatory.<sup>9</sup>

*Est 9:30 And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,*

- among which was Judea, that was become a province, first of the Chaldean, now of the Persian empire, see Ezra 5:8 to whom also these letters were sent, directing and ordering the Jews there to observe these days, who were also concerned in the deliverance wrought:<sup>3</sup>
- truth, i.e. the true religion;<sup>10</sup> i.e. sincerity;
- with peace, i.e. friendship and kindness to his brethren;<sup>9</sup>

*Est 9:31 To confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry.*

- There is no mention of their receiving the approbation of any high priest, nor of any authority beyond that of Mordecai and Esther; the king could not join in such a business, as he had nothing to do with the Jewish religion, that not being the religion of the country.<sup>1</sup>
- the vows they then uttered when they fasted and cried; that, if God would hear and help them, they would not fail to praise him in all best manner. Now, therefore, sith the vows of God were upon them, they should by keeping these days offer unto him thanksgiving, and pay their vows unto the Most High. Some think that the fasting and crying here mentioned referreth to those in Zechariah, Zechariah 7:5, in

<sup>8</sup> The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2010 by BibleSoft, inc

<sup>9</sup> Barnes, Albert. "Commentary on Esther 9:29". "Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible 1870.

<sup>10</sup> Poole, Matthew, "Commentary on Esther 9:30". Matthew Poole's English Annotations on the Holy Bible. 1685.

remembrance of the desolation of Jerusalem; that, as they fasted then, so they should feast now (Aben Ezra); God having fulfilled his promise there made, of turning their fasting into feasting, and added, "Therefore love the truth and peace," Zechariah 8:19 : confer Mordecai's words of peace and truth, supra, Esther 9:30.<sup>2</sup>

*Est 9:32 And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.*

- The Targum says, And by the word of Esther all these things relative to Purim were confirmed; and the roll was transcribed in this book. The Syriac is the same as the Hebrew, and the Septuagint in this place not very different.<sup>1</sup>
- As "the book" elsewhere in Esther always means a particular book - "the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia" - Esther 2:23; Esther 6:1; Esther 10:2 it seems best to give it the same sense here.<sup>8</sup>
- It is doubtful what "the book" here means. The Vulgate explains it of the Book of Esther itself, and so many modern scholars. Still "the book" hardly seems a natural Hebrew way of referring to a work on the part of its author as he writes it, and no similar case is adducible. Others think it must have been a book written at the time on the subject of the festival, which is, perhaps, possible. Canon Rawlinson identifies it with "the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia." Because such is the use of the word book elsewhere in Esther.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ellicott, Charles John. "Commentary on Esther 9:32". "Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers". 1905.