

Esther chapter 9 verses 1 to 17

A Day of Reckoning



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. The Jews assembled in their cities in all the provinces of King Xerxes to attack those seeking their destruction. No one could stand against them, because the people of all the other nationalities were afraid of them. And 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. Mordecai was prominent in the palace; his reputation spread throughout the provinces, and he became more and more powerful.

The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and they did what they pleased to those who hated them. In the citadel of Susa, the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. They also killed Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizatha, the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. But they did not lay their hands on the plunder. The number of those slain in the citadel of Susa was reported to the king that same day. The 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."

"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 hanged on gallows." So the king commanded that this be done. An edict was issued in Susa, and they hanged the ten sons of Haman. The 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. 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. 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.

The day arrives

On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out.

9 months have passed since the last chapter.

– the day of the edict to destroy the Jews

Time of year ... February – March -

Times of preparations – for protection ...

The Opposite Occurred

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.

We see the Sovereign God's ordering of events :-

The enemies' hopes turned to despair

Hatred of God's people will be dealt with!

Zechariah 2:8 For this is what the LORD Almighty says:
“.... whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye—”

Strength and security in unity

The Jews assembled in their cities in all the provinces of King Xerxes to attack those seeking their destruction.

This took place throughout the empire

To attack or is it self-defence?

They have been given authority to actively go for those who they know by now are seeking their destruction
Their enemies are motivated by hatred and greed.

those who sought their harm (ESV)

No by-stander support for the enemy

No one could stand against them,
because the people of all the other nationalities were afraid of them.

Was there no resistance or opposition?

This fear (the normal kind) had been brought about by God

Are the nations learning to respect Israel's God?

On our side?

And all the nobles of the provinces, the satraps,
the governors and the king`s administrators helped the Jews,

The authorities in power at this time worked **for** them

Proverbs 21:1

In the LORD's hand the king's heart is a stream of water
that he channels toward all who please him.

Afraid of Mordecai?

And 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.

Is this the way the Persian power pyramid worked?
Their jobs/lives depended on submitting to authority.

Did Mordechai cause them fear because he sought for justice and integrity?

A powerful position and a good reputation

Mordecai was prominent in the palace; his reputation spread throughout the provinces, and he became more and more powerful.

Did he have a good reputation with outsiders?

1 Timothy 3:7 *A leader* must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Cf Joseph – the Lord was with him. What he did prospered.

Cf. Joshua 6:27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

Destruction of their enemies

The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and they did what they pleased to those who hated them.

How does this tally with love?

Does it explain it by saying those were brutal times?

Doing “what they pleased” does not mean unrestrained violence, but they destroyed their attackers.

We will consider this in more detail later.

The death toll

In the citadel of Susa, the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. They also killed Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizatha, the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews.

We are not told if or how many Jews were killed.

500 MEN (not women and children!)– is that a large number in the capitol city?

10 are named – Haman's family (they were all in on it)
This was a Persian practice – the family pays too.

Technical point ! An unusual list vs 7-9

Parshandatha, Dalphon,
Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia,
Aridatha, Parmashta, Arisai,
Aridai and Vaizatha, the ten
sons of Haman

וַאֲרִיסַי
וַאֲרִידַתָּה
וַאֲרִידַי
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וַאֲרִישַׁתָּה

(Note: The peculiar position of the names of the sons of Haman in editions of the Bible, grounded as it is upon the ancient mode of writing, must originally have been intended merely to give prominence to the names, and facilitate their computation. The later Rabbis, however, have endeavoured to discover some deeper meaning in them.

But they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

The decree had said that they could,
BUT it wasn't about greed or property
It was about survival.

Cp. the case of Abraham, when he refused to make himself liable to the accusation that he had made himself rich by his defeat of the king of Sodom's enemies (Genesis 14:23).



Feedback report

The number of those slain in the citadel of Susa was reported to the king that same day. The 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?"

What about the rest?

Something more?

Now what is your petition?
It will be given you. What is your request? It will also be granted."



Ahasuerus/Xerxes senses that Esther has something else to ask.

An unfinished job.

"If it pleases the king," Esther answered, "give the Jews in Susa permission to carry out this day`s edict tomorrow also."

Repeat in Susa today`s attack – the original centre of the hostility.

Are some known enemies hiding for another day?

Or have they called in assistance?

The edict to destroy the Jews still stands.

It's a warning

"and let Haman`s ten sons be hanged on gallows."

They are dead already.

This is a public shaming of their enemies
and a warning of the fate of those who planned the evil.

Deuteronomy 21:22 "If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, ...

Done

So the king commanded that this be done. An edict was issued in Susa,
and they hanged the ten sons of Haman.

The final end of all that Haman had planned

He has nothing left.

The next day

The 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.

Another united confrontation – 300 men died

What would have been the population of Susa at the time?

It was a big city.

It may have been home to several thousand.

It was not about money.

Feedback from the provinces

Meanwhile, the remainder of the Jews who were in the king`s provinces **also** assembled to protect themselves and get relief from their enemies.

The purpose was to protect themselves

Relief – no more threats or danger!

Seventy-five thousand

They killed seventy-five thousand of them
but did not lay their hands on the plunder.

About 500 men (mostly?) in each of the 127 provinces

Emphasis again is given – no plunder

They are acting from a right motive.

Rest

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.

In the provinces –it was a single day of judgement

The day had been chosen by Haman

Next day they celebrate – victory, deliverance.



Matthew Henry's Commentary on verses 1-17

The enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them by the former edict. If they had attempted nothing against the people of God, they would not themselves have suffered. The Jews, acting together, strengthened one another. Let us learn to stand fast in one spirit, and with one mind, striving together against the enemies of our souls, who endeavour to rob us of our faith, which is more precious than our lives. The Jews, to the honour of their religion, showed contempt of worldly wealth, that they might make it appear they desired nothing except their own preservation. In every case the people of God should manifest humanity and disinterestedness, frequently refusing advantages which might lawfully be obtained. The Jews celebrated their festival the day after they had finished their work. When we have received great mercies from God, we ought to be speedy in making thankful returns to him.

Vengeance – personal and public

These are Jesus' words to his disciples for their personal lives

Matthew 5:43-48 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Living a better way

Vengeance – personal and public

These are Paul's words to disciples for their personal lives

Romans 12:17-21 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Personal one-to-one responses to difficult people,
and God's role.

Vengeance – personal and public

These are Paul' words to disciples in public life.

Romans 13:3-4 For rulers (*should*) hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for **rulers do not bear the sword for no reason**. They are **God's servants, agents of wrath** to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

The authorities are meant to actively punish evil.

Vengeance – personal and public

These are Peter's words to disciples concerning the wicked

2 Peter 3:3-7 Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

God has judged in the past and he will judge again.

So what about Esther chapter 9 ?



God had put Mordechai in the role of public administrator, and God used him to bring judgement on the wicked opponents of His people.

This is similar to the period of Judges under Joshua when he was called to destroy the evil Canaanites.

Vengeance – personal and public

The Final Judgement Day

Matthew 25:31-46 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ...

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ...

"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."