

Party Time at the Feast of Purim



The Book of Esther

A story with a personal interest for you and me

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. 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.

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

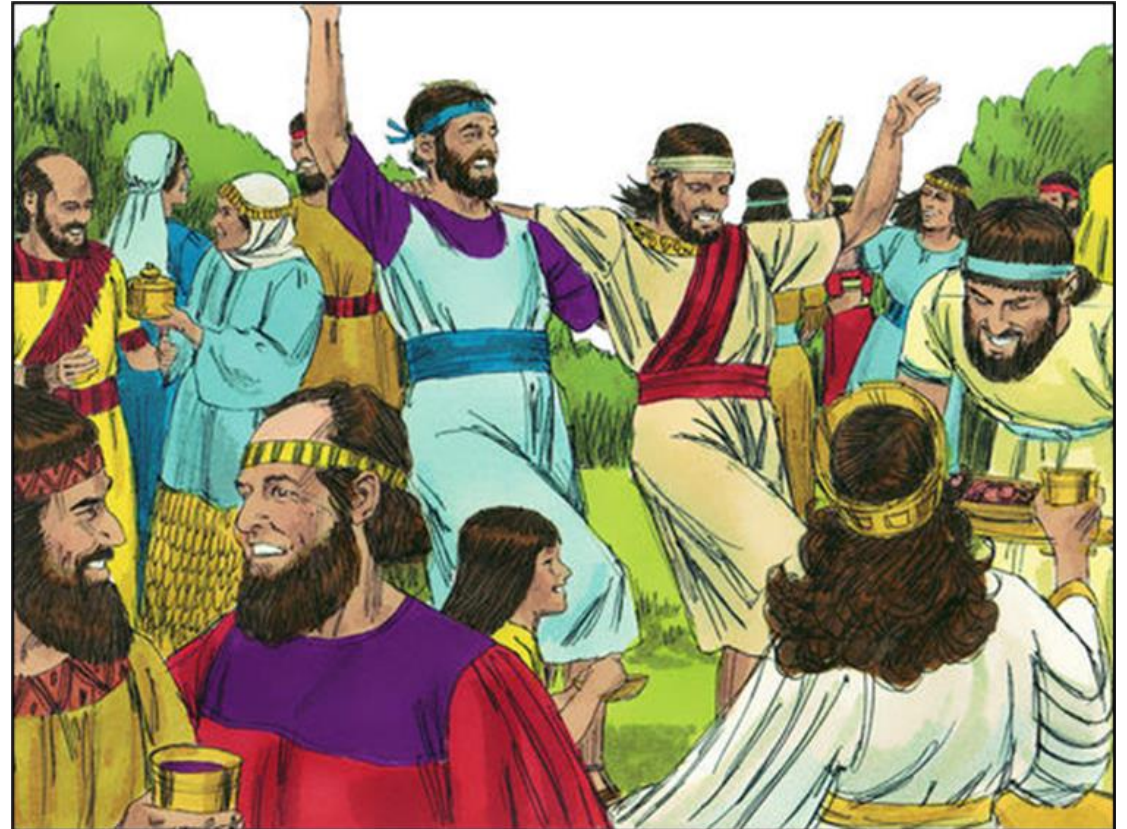
So the Jews agreed to continue the celebration they had begun, doing what Mordecai had written to them. For Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them and had cast the <pur> (that is, the lot) for their ruin and destruction. But when 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. (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, 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.

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. So Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter concerning Purim. And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Xerxes--words of goodwill and assurance-- 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. Esther`s decree confirmed these regulations about Purim, and it was written down in the records.

A Day Later

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.

The 15th of Adar



A Day Earlier than City Jews

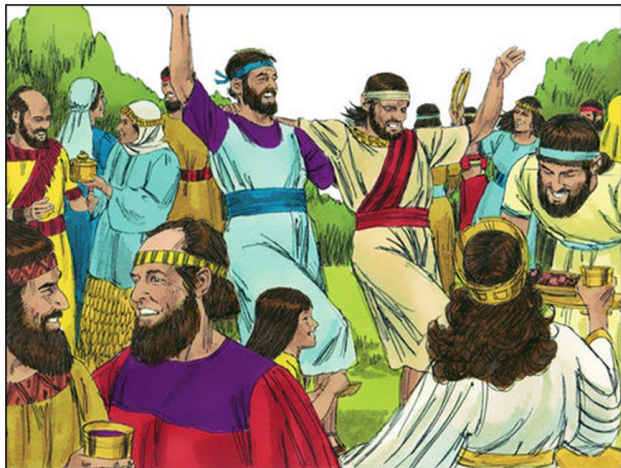
That is why rural Jews--those living in villages--observe the fourteenth of the month of Adar as a day of joy and feasting, a day for giving presents to each other.

The 14th of Adar



A Simple Solution

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



Celebrate – it's an order.
BOTH days



A Day to bless others too

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.

No one is to miss out



Keep the celebration going another day

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

No objections

Forming a tradition



Why they Celebrate

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. 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.

The reason for the season



An unusual name

Therefore these days were called Purim, from the word 'pur'.

The name is the Hebrew plural of the Persian word

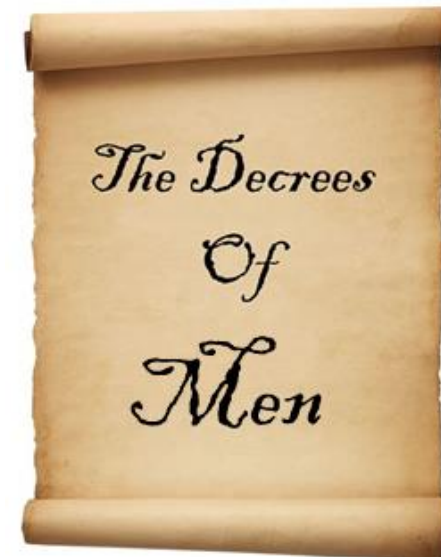
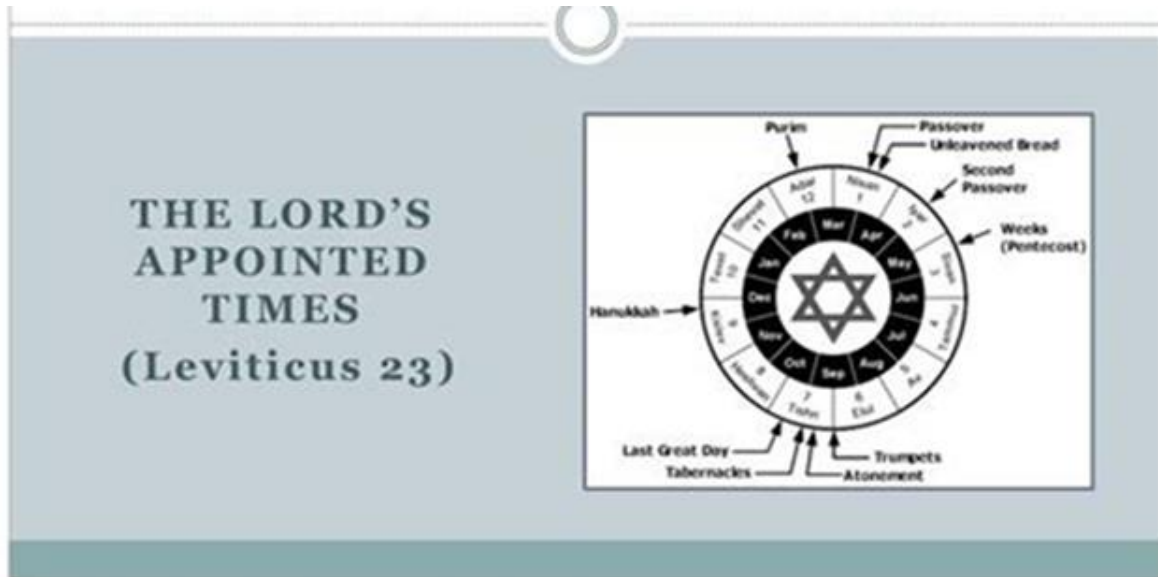


A New Tradition

Because of everything written in this letter and because of what they had seen and what had happened to them, 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.

It is not in feasts given in Torah

A new Tradition agreed and established



A Day to be Remembered

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.

Something to always remember with gratitude.

Keeping history alive
What God has done for us...



All Agreed

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

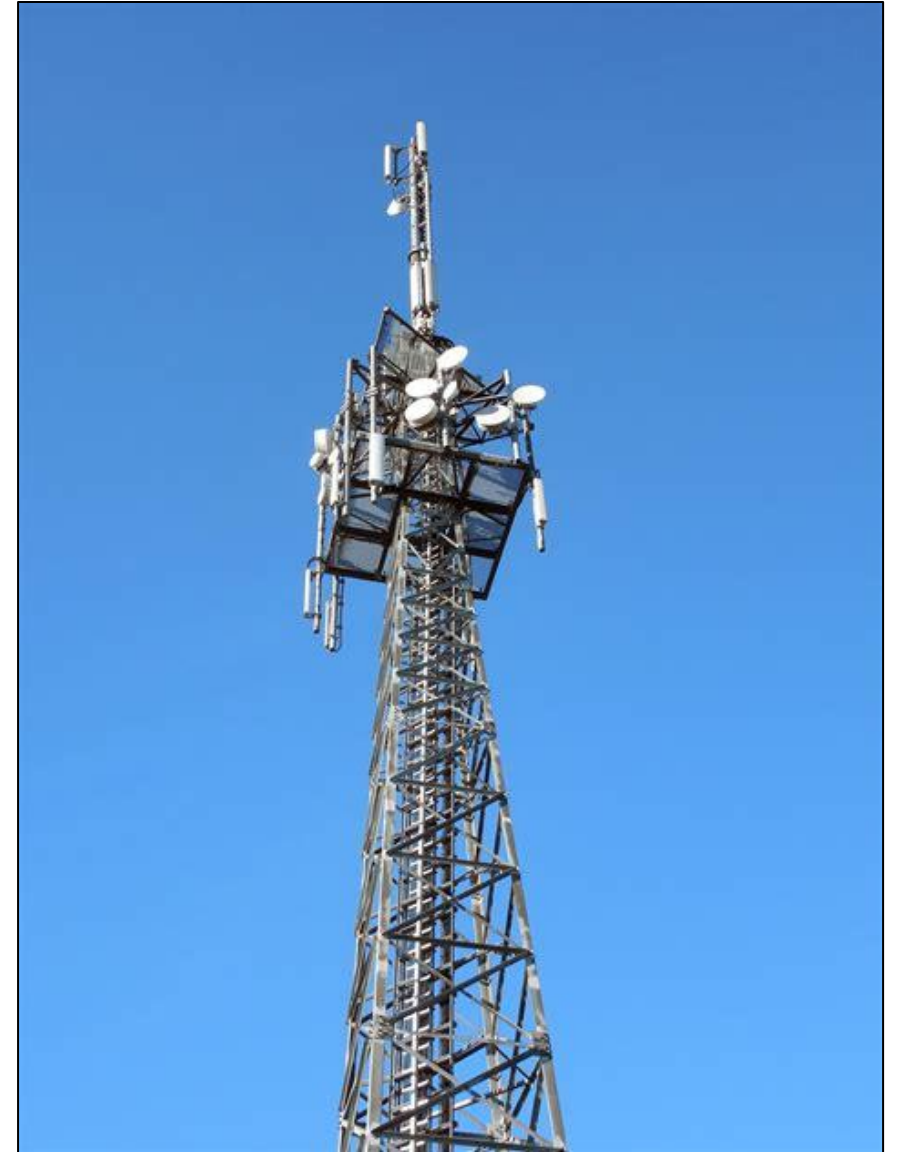


These powerful people confirm the agreement of the Jews

Make it known

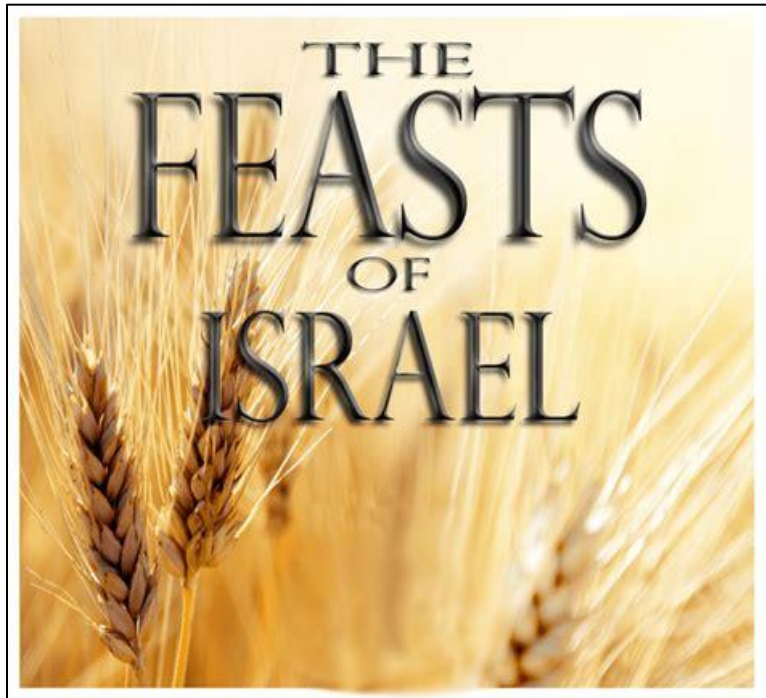
And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Xerxes-- words of goodwill and assurance-- to establish these days of Purim at their designated times, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had decreed for them,

Agreed - set the date for next year



One of the Feasts of Israel

and as they had established for themselves and their descendants in regard to their times of fasting and lamentation. Esther`s decree confirmed these regulations about Purim, and it was written down in the records.



It was to become part of the established feasts of the Jews

Chapter 10 - a P.S. to the story.

King Xerxes imposed tribute throughout the empire, to its distant shores. 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? Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Xerxes, 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.

Mordechai was mentioned in the royal records.

Appreciated for what he had done.



What is unusual about the book of Esther ?

- 1, God's name is not mentioned (except in code)
- 2, Names are derived from Persian gods: Marduk, Astarte
- 3, There are no miracles



Names are derived from Persian gods: Marduk, Astarte

Esther's Hebrew name was Hadassah (Myrtle)
but it was it kept under cover.

We see the same name change in the book of Daniel
(Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah)

Just because they give you a name of a god
doesn't mean you worship it.

For there is one God
and one mediator between God and
mankind, the man Christ Jesus,
1Timothy 2:5

There are no miracles

How many 'coincidences' make a miracle ?

All of these things are 'ordinary' in themselves

It just happened that :

Vashti refused to come

Esther was the favourite

Mordecai revealed the conspiracy and a record was kept

The people prayed

The king accepted Esther's unannounced entrance

The king couldn't sleep that night

The servants read from the right part of the record

Haman arrived just then

Mordecai was promoted to Haman's position



Lessons for us from Esther

God is at work in the detail

(How often can you see a miracle in the making ?)

Isn't that worth celebrating ?

Lessons for us from Esther

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(How often can you see a miracle in the making ?)

God uses individuals who are available

(Are you willing ?– it could be dangerous !)

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God saves his people

(You can be sure you are one of them)

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Lessons for us from Esther

God is at work in the detail

(How often can you see a miracle in the making ?)

God uses individuals who are available

(Are you willing ?– it could be dangerous !)

God saves his people

(You can be sure you are one of them)

God rules the nations of the world

(That applies now)

Isn't that worth celebrating ?

The Book of Esther

A story with a personal interest for you and me

No Jewish people → No apostles

No Jewish people → No Messiah Jesus

No Jewish people → No return of the King



And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28