

Esther 9.1-10.3

- Set in Susa during reign of Ahasuerus (Xerxes I), who ruled Persia from 486-465

3.1-6-11: Haman the Amalekite's Effort to Exterminate the Jews

7 *pur* is an Akkadian (Old Persian) word for 'lot', from *pur kararu* – 'to cast a lot'. 9 this payment is 333 tons of silver!! annual revenue of the Persian Empire in that era was 10.920 talents. .

3.12-15: Haman the Agagite Orders the Extermination of the Jews

8: Undermining the Planned Genocide

1-8: Esther and Mordecai Acquire Authority

7-8 'You write it!'

8.9-17: Mordecai issues a New Decree on Behalf of the King

9.1-5: Victory for the Jews

1 A summary of the day: What happened?

2 Who is attacking whom? 'those who sought to do them harm': why is this important?

'to resist, withstand' (Judges 2.14; Daniel 11.16)

3 What were the regional Persian leaders ordered to do in 3.12-15? What do they do? What were they ordered to do in 8.9-16?

4 Why do the officials respond like this? lit. 'for Mordecai was great in the house of the king'

5 lit. 'the Jews struck all their enemies dead . . . and did as they pleased with those who hated them'

What do you make of the Jews actions on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar? F. Bush argues that 'The Jews' actions are strictly defensive. They do not instigate the fighting, for they attack 'those who sought to do them harm' (*Esther* 463). Do you agree?

9.6-19: Another Day of Purging those Who Hate Jews

7-10 In Hebrew MSS, the names of Haman's sons are written in one vertical column on the right-hand side of the page, with the word *we'et* 'and' written on the left side. The pattern is used in Joshua 12.9-23 in a list of the names of the kings of Canaan. Why do you think?

12 An accounting and an additional petition and request. What happens here? Fox argues that 'having willy-nilly taken sides, Xerxes has become a partisan of the Jews' . . . hence 'admiration is the only possible tone here.' Do you agree that Xerxes' tone is admiration?

13 What does Esther request? 'Defend themselves' (8.11) and 'take vengeance on our enemies' (8.13). In what way will this day differ from the previous day?

16 What happens? What did the Jews NOT do? Why does this matter? How is 1 Samuel 15.1-26, which records that the Israelites defeated Agag and the Amalekites, instructive here?

17b and 18b – lit 'a day of feasting and joy'

19 lit. 'the *perazim* Jews, those who live in *perazot* cities'. The Talmud translates this term as 'one living in an unwalled village. This phrase has been interpreted a number of ways.

9.20-32: The Feast of Purim Instituted

Consider 9.20-25. In what ways does Mordecai's or the narrator's summary differ with what has transpired in fact? Why? Who is the hero in this summary? Who was the hero in fact?

21 Purim – a feast to be celebrated annually on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar

24a lit. 'to demolish/disturb and destroy them'; the Hebrew word can mean 'to throw into confusion' or 'to demolish, to bring to ruin' (Jeremiah 51.34)

26-32: The Addendum?

'Therefore . . . these days are called *purim*' Is there an issue here in the narrator's logic (3.7)?

Consider *Purim* to the other Jewish Festivals: Weeks/Pentecost, Booths/Tabernacles, Unleavened Bread/Passover, Trumpets/Rosh Hashana, Atonement/Yom Kippur, and Lights/Hanukkah. What are the elements of this festival?

29-32 The Second letter – From whom? What is the purpose of this letter?

31 'fasts and lamenting' – a directive or a reference to 4.3 and 4.16?

10.1-3: Epilogue

1 'King Xerxes imposed a tribute tax' – what does this mean/ matter?

2 'are they not recorded in the Chronicles of the kings . . .' elevates the status of Mordecai, as in 1 Kings 14.29, 15.23, 16.14, etc.