

Esther 3:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.

Analysis

In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar. Haman used divination—casting "Pur" (פּוּר, the Akkadian word for "lot")—to determine the auspicious date for destroying the Jews. The practice of casting lots for timing important actions was common in ancient Near Eastern paganism, reflecting belief that gods/fate controlled random outcomes. The lot-casting occurred in Nisan (March-April), the first month, and determined Adar (February-March), the twelfth month, as the date. This eleven-month delay proved providentially crucial—it gave time for Esther to learn of the plot, approach the king, and secure deliverance. Haman's reliance on pagan divination to time the genocide demonstrates spiritual blindness—he sought supernatural guidance from false gods, unaware that the true God was orchestrating events to destroy him. The festival name "Purim" derives from this lot-casting, forever commemorating how God overruled pagan divination.

Historical Context

Lot-casting (casting lots) for divination was widespread in ancient Near Eastern cultures, including Babylon and Persia. The Akkadian word *puru* for "lot"

demonstrates Babylonian cultural influence on Persian practices. Archaeological discoveries include various dice, stones, and other objects used for casting lots. The practice assumed that divine/supernatural forces controlled random outcomes, making lot-casting a method of discerning fate's will. Ironically, Proverbs 16:33 affirms that "the lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD"—even pagan divination serves God's purposes. The eleven-month delay between Nisan and Adar, determined by lots, gave exactly the time needed for God's counter-plan through Esther. The lot intended to determine Jews' destruction instead determined the date of their victory.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Haman's use of divination demonstrate the spiritual blindness of relying on false gods while the true God orchestrates events?
2. What does the providential timing (eleven-month delay) teach about God's sovereignty even over pagan practices like lot-casting?

Interlinear Text

חֹדֶשׁ	הָרִאשׁוֹן	הוא	חֹדֶשׁ	נִסָּן	בְּשָׁנָה
and from month	In the first	H1931	and from month	Nisan	year
H2320	H7223		H2320	H5212	H8141
שָׁנִים	עָשָׂה ה	לִמֶּלֶךְ	אֲחַשְׁוֵר וְשׁ	הֵפֶּי יל	פּוֹר
in the twelfth	H6240	of king	Ahasuerus	they cast	Pur
H8147		H4428	H325	H5307	H6332
לְהַגּוֹכֹל	לִפְנֵי י	הָמָן	לִי וּמִ	לִי וּמִ	חֹדֶשׁ
that is the lot	before	Haman	from day	from day	and from month
H1486	H6440	H2001	H3117	H3117	H2320
חֹדֶשׁ	שָׁנִים	עָשָׂה ר	הוא	חֹדֶשׁ	אָדָר:
and from month	in the twelfth	H6240	H1931	and from month	Adar
H2320	H8147			H2320	H143

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 6:15 (Kingdom): And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

Proverbs 16:33 (Parallel theme): The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.