

Esther 8:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.

Analysis

Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. The new decree sets the exact same date Haman had chosen for destroying the Jews (3:13)—the thirteenth of Adar (shloshah asar lechodes sheneim asar hu-chodesh Adar, שְׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם-עָשָׂר הוּא-חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר). This identical timing creates the conditions for the Jews' deliverance: rather than being destroyed on that day, they would defend themselves and prevail over their enemies.

The repetition "upon one day in all the provinces" emphasizes the empire-wide scope matching the original threat's extent. Just as Haman's decree reached every province (3:13), so the counter-decree extends throughout Ahasuerus's realm—from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces (1:1). God's providence ensures that wherever Jews face danger, they also receive authorization to defend themselves.

The choice to maintain the same date rather than canceling it reflects Persian legal inflexibility—existing decrees could not be revoked. Instead, a counter-decree authorized the Jews to resist. This apparent limitation becomes providential: the single day of conflict decisively settles the matter rather than leaving ongoing uncertainty. The month Adar would forever commemorate this reversal, transforming a date of intended mourning into celebration (9:22).

Historical Context

The month of Adar (February-March in the Gregorian calendar) held the date Haman selected through casting lots (pur, 3:7). The eleven-month gap between the decree (first month, 3:12) and execution date (twelfth month) gave time for the counter-decree, Jewish preparation, and the unfolding of events described in chapters 8-9. This extended timeline reflects the Persian Empire's vast size—decrees required months to reach distant provinces, and administrative coordination took considerable time.

The irrevocability of Persian law, while creating dramatic tension in Esther and Daniel, also reflected real Persian legal theory. Royal decrees represented the unchangeable will of the sovereign, analogous to divine law. This principle gave stability to imperial administration but created problems when circumstances changed. The solution Mordecai devised—not revoking but countering the original decree—worked within Persian legal constraints while achieving the necessary protective outcome.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does God's ability to work within apparently inflexible constraints demonstrate sovereignty over circumstances that seem unchangeable?
2. What does the transformation of Adar 13 from destruction to deliverance teach about God's power to redeem dates and circumstances marked for evil?

Interlinear Text

בְּיּוֹם	אֶחָד	בְּכָל	מְדִינַת	הַמֶּלֶךְ	אֲחַשְׁוֵרֶשׁ
day	Upon one	H3605	in all the provinces	of king	Ahasuerus
H3117	H259		H4082	H4428	H325
הַ	בְּשָׁלוֹשׁ	הַ	חֹדֶשׁ	שְׁנֵים	עָשָׂר
	namely upon the thirteenth	H6240	month	day of the twelfth	H6240
	H7969		H2320	H8147	H1931
חֹדֶשׁ	אָדָר:				
month	Adar				
H2320	H143				

Additional Cross-References

Esther 9:1 (Kingdom): Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;)