

# Esther 8:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

## Analysis

**The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.** The phrase "published unto all people" (galui l'khol-ha'amim, גָּלוּי לְכֹל־הָעַמִּים) indicates comprehensive public proclamation, ensuring that everyone—Jews and potential enemies alike—knew about the counter-decree. The Hebrew galui (גָּלוּי) means "revealed" or "made open," emphasizing transparency and wide dissemination. Unlike secret plots, this decree operated through official, visible legal channels.

The purpose clause "that the Jews should be ready" (lihyot haYehudim atidim, לִהְיוֹת הַיְּהוּדִים אֶתִידִים) emphasizes preparation and readiness. The word atidim (אֶתִידִים) suggests being prepared, equipped, or standing ready for a specific time. The Jews would have months to prepare mentally, physically, and organizationally for self-defense. The phrase "to avenge themselves on their enemies" (l'hinaken me'oyeveihem, לְהִנָּקֵם מֵאֹיְבֵיהֶם) uses the verb nakam (נָקַם), meaning to avenge or take vengeance—not random violence but righteous response to those who sought their destruction.

The public nature of this decree served multiple purposes: it warned enemies that attacking Jews would meet resistance, it emboldened Jews to prepare defense, and it established legal authorization for self-defense. The transparency prevented the

kind of secretive plotting Haman had attempted. Everything occurred through official legal processes, demonstrating that God's providence works through legitimate institutions and open procedures.

## Historical Context

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Persian imperial communication required elaborate infrastructure. The Persepolis fortification tablets document the relay system of mounted couriers, supply stations, and administrative coordination necessary for empire-wide decree distribution. Royal edicts were written in multiple languages (cf. 8:9) and posted publicly in each province. Archaeological discoveries include public inscriptions of Persian royal decrees, confirming the practice described here.

The eleven-month preparation period between the counter-decree (third month, 8:9) and the execution date (twelfth month, 8:12) gave Jews throughout the empire time to organize, acquire weapons, and coordinate defensive strategies. In ancient warfare, preparation time significantly affected outcomes. The decree's public nature meant potential attackers knew in advance that Jews were authorized and ready to defend themselves, likely deterring some who might otherwise have acted on Haman's original decree.

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How does the public, transparent nature of this decree contrast with secretive evil plotting, and what does this teach about operating with integrity?
2. What does the emphasis on preparation and readiness teach about Christian spiritual warfare and standing firm against evil?

## Additional Cross-References

