

Esther 9:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? now what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? and it shall be done.

Analysis

And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? now what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? and it shall be done. The king's report to Esther demonstrates his continued favor and his astonishment at the conflict's extent. The phrase "five hundred men in Shushan the palace" (chamesh meot ish b'Shushan habirah, חֲמִשׁ מֵאוֹת אִישׁ בְּשֻׁשָׁן הַבִּירָה) specifies the number of enemies killed just in the capital's citadel area, not including the broader city (v. 15) or the empire's other provinces (v. 16).

The mention of "the ten sons of Haman" emphasizes the complete destruction of Haman's line—all his male heirs named in verses 7-9 have been executed. This fulfills the principle of corporate judgment seen elsewhere in Scripture while also preventing future vengeance from Haman's family. The king's rhetorical question "what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces?" suggests surprise at the Jewish victory's magnitude, implying substantial conflict throughout the empire.

Most remarkable is the king's renewed offer: "what is thy petition? and it shall be

granted thee." This echoes his earlier promise (5:3, 6; 7:2), showing sustained favor toward Esther. He offers additional requests despite the extensive action already taken. This sets up Esther's request for an additional day of defense in Shushan (v. 13) and the public display of Haman's sons' bodies. The king's willingness to grant more demonstrates how completely Esther's influence has replaced Haman's.

Historical Context

The casualty numbers reported—500 in the citadel, 300 more the next day in Shushan city (v. 15), and 75,000 in the provinces (v. 16)—indicate significant resistance to the Jewish community despite the counter-decree's advance warning. These numbers suggest substantial elements within the Persian Empire remained committed to Haman's anti-Jewish agenda even after his execution and royal reversal. The conflict represented more than random attacks; it involved organized resistance.

Ancient Near Eastern warfare often involved destroying enemy families to prevent future vengeance. The execution of Haman's ten sons served this purpose while also demonstrating that opposition to the Jews brought complete destruction. The public hanging of their bodies (v. 13-14) sent a powerful warning to others contemplating similar actions. This harsh practice, though troubling to modern readers, reflected standard ancient practice regarding traitors and rebels.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How should believers understand divine judgment that includes families and corporate groups, not just individual perpetrators?
2. What does the king's continued favor toward Esther teach about how God's grace exceeds what we request or deserve?

Interlinear Text

הַבֵּיכָה	בְּשׁוּשַׁן	הַמֶּלֶכָה	לְאֶסְתֵּר	הַמֶּלֶךְ	וַיֹּאמֶר
the palace	in Shushan	the queen	unto Esther	And the king	said
H1002	H7800	H4436	H635	H4428	H559
וְאֵת	אֲנָשִׁים	מֵאֵת	חֲמִשָּׁה	וְאַבְדָּה	הַיְּהוּדִים
H853	men	hundred	five	and destroyed	The Jews
H376	H3967	H2568	H6	H2026	H3064
מֶה	הַמֶּלֶךְ	מְדִינֹת	בְּשָׂרָה	הֵמָּן	בְּנֵי
H4100	And the king	provinces	in the rest	of Haman	sons
H4428	H4082	H7605	H2001	H1121	H6235
לָהּ	וְיִנָּתֵן	שְׂאֵלָתָהּ	וְמָה	וְתַעֲשֶׂה:	
H0	and it shall be granted	now what is thy petition	H4100	H6213	
	H5414	H7596			
	וְתַעֲשֶׂה:	עוֹד	בְּקִשְׁתָּהּ	וְמָה	
	and it shall be done	further	thee or what is thy request	H4100	
	H6213	H5750	H1246		

Additional Cross-References

Esther 7:2 (Kingdom): And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

Esther 5:6 (Kingdom): And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

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