

Esther 9:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

Analysis

And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons. The king's immediate compliance—"commanded it so to be done" (vayomer hamelek l'he'asot ken, וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַעֲשֵׂת כֵּן)—demonstrates Esther's complete influence over Ahasuerus. What began with Esther's fearful approach (4:11, 16) has resulted in the king granting her every request. The phrase emphasizes the king's authority making Esther's petition official royal policy.

The note that "the decree was given at Shushan" (vatinatein hadat b'Shushan, וַתִּתְגַּתֵּן הַדָּת בְּשׁוּשָׁן) indicates formal legal authorization, not merely verbal permission. The word dat (dat) again emphasizes official decree status. This formalization mattered—it made the additional day's defensive actions legally authorized rather than potentially prosecutable violence. Persian bureaucratic culture required proper documentation even for actions the king verbally approved.

The execution of the decree—"they hanged Haman's ten sons" (vayitlu et-aseret b'nei-Haman, וַיַּתְלֻ אֶת-עָשָׂר בָּנֵי-הָמָן)—completes the reversal. Haman's attempt to destroy Mordecai and all Jews results in his own family's destruction. The public display warns others while vindicating the Jewish community. The terse statement reflects the narrative's focus on facts rather than emotions—this is historical record, not glorification of violence.

Historical Context

The second day of conflict in Shushan (Adar 14) resulted in 300 additional enemy casualties (v. 15), bringing the capital's total to 800—far more than any other single location. This concentration of opposition in Shushan likely reflected the capital's concentration of Haman's supporters, associates, and those who had invested in his agenda. Government centers often have vested interests in existing policies that other regions don't share.

The formal decree authorizing the additional day followed Persian legal requirements. Even when the king verbally approved Esther's request, official documentation was necessary for legal protection. This bureaucratic detail demonstrates the narrative's accuracy regarding Persian administrative culture. The Persepolis fortification tablets show similar patterns—verbal royal commands followed by written documentation for official implementation and archival purposes.

The public hanging of Haman's sons served pedagogical purposes in ancient justice systems. Without modern mass communication, visual displays of judgment communicated legal and moral lessons to populations. The bodies hanging where everyone could see warned against similar treason while demonstrating that royal justice executed what it decreed.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the bureaucratic formality even in granting defensive rights teach about the importance of working through legitimate legal channels?
2. What does the complete reversal of Haman's plans teach about the futility of fighting against God's purposes and people?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	לְבָשֵׂשׁ	וְתִּשְׁלַח	לְגֹזֶר	בְּמִצְרָיִם	וְתִּתְּבַּחַת	וְתִּתְּבַּחַת	וְתִּתְּבַּחַת
commanded	And the king	it so to be done		H3651	was given	and the decree	
H559	H4428	H6213			H5414		H1881
at Shushan	ten	sons	Haman's		and they hanged		
H7800	H853	H6235	H1121	H2001	H8518		

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