

Esther 9:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan; but on the prey they laid not their hand.

Analysis

For the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan; but on the prey they laid not their hand. Shushan's Jews received permission for a second day of defense (v. 13), slaying 300 more enemies on Adar 14. The repetition "but on the prey they laid not their hand" (echoing v. 10, 16) emphasizes that Jewish motive was self-defense, not enrichment. This restraint distinguished them from their enemies (who sought plunder, 3:13) and demonstrated righteousness. The double emphasis on refusing spoils makes this a central point—Jews fought for survival and justice, not greed. This restraint honored God and distinguished their actions from mere violence or vengeance.

Historical Context

The two-day battle in Shushan (Adar 13-14) contrasted with the single day in the provinces (Adar 13 only), explaining why Purim is celebrated on different days (14th in most places, 15th in Shushan/walled cities). The extra day suggests Shushan faced more intense opposition or larger enemy forces requiring extended conflict. Archaeological evidence confirms Shushan's size and significance as imperial capital would have concentrated both Jewish population and potential enemies. The 300 killed on the second day, added to the 500 on the first (v. 12),

made 800 total in Shushan—proportionally high compared to the 75,000 throughout all provinces (v. 16), suggesting intense urban conflict.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the repeated emphasis on refusing plunder demonstrate that righteousness in victory requires purity of motive and restraint in action?
2. What does this teach about distinguishing legitimate self-defense from exploitation or revenge?

Interlinear Text

בְּיֹם גֶּמֶת	בְּשֻׁשָׁן	אֲשֶׁר	בַּהֲזֵד יִם	יְקַבֵּל וְ	
gathered themselves together	For the Jews	H834	at Shushan	H1571	day
H6950	H3064		H7800		H3117
on the fourteenth	also of the month	Adar	and slew	at Shushan	
H702	H2320	H143	H2026	H7800	
three hundred men	but on the prey	H3808	they laid	H853	not their hand
H7969	H3967	H376	H961	H7971	H3027

Additional Cross-References

Esther 9:10 (Parallel theme): The ten sons of Haman the son of Hamedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they; but on the spoil laid they not their hand.

Esther 8:11 (Parallel theme): Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey,

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