

Esther 9:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To establish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly,

Analysis

To establish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly, Mordecai's letters establish Purim as an annual festival, institutionalizing the remembrance of Jewish deliverance. The verb "to establish" (l'kayeim, לְקַיֵּם) means "to establish," "to confirm," or "to make permanent." The root qum (קָם) suggests causing something to stand or endure—Mordecai ensures this deliverance won't fade from memory but will remain part of Jewish identity and calendar permanently.

The two-day celebration—"the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day" (yom arba'ah asar l'chodesh Adar ve'yom chamishah asar bo, יּוֹם אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ אָדָר וַיּוֹם חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר בּוֹ) —reflects different experiences in Shushan versus the provinces. Provincial Jews fought and rested on the 14th, celebrating on that date. Shushan Jews fought both the 13th and 14th, resting and celebrating on the 15th (v. 17-18). Mordecai institutionalizes both dates so all Jews commemorate together, though with awareness of varying local experiences.

The word "yearly" (shanah v'shanah, שָׁנָה וּשָׁנָה, literally "year by year") establishes perpetual observance. This wasn't a one-time celebration but permanent addition to the Jewish calendar. Unlike the Mosaic festivals given at Sinai, Purim originated from historical deliverance during the exile. Yet Mordecai's authority and the community's affirmation made it binding nonetheless—demonstrating that God's ongoing providential acts create legitimate bases for worship and remembrance.

Historical Context

Purim remains one of Judaism's most joyously celebrated festivals to this day, fulfilling Mordecai's intention that it be observed "year by year." The festival's establishment during the post-exilic period demonstrates developing Jewish religious practice responding to God's ongoing activity, not just ancient Mosaic legislation. The dual-date observance (14th and 15th of Adar) continues in modern practice, with most Jewish communities celebrating the 14th (Purim) while Jerusalem and other ancient walled cities observe the 15th (Shushan Purim).

The naming of the festival Purim (from *pur*, "lot," v. 24) emphasizes how God overturned Haman's lot-casting to destroy the Jews. What Haman intended as determining the Jews' destruction became the date of their deliverance. This reversal theme—central to Esther's theology—is embedded in the festival's very name. Annual celebration ensures each generation learns how God sovereignly controls what appears to be random chance.

Mordecai's authority to establish a religious festival demonstrates the respect accorded to him as both governmental official (10:3) and spiritual leader. The Jewish community's acceptance of this festival (9:23, 27-28) shows their recognition that God's deliverance warranted permanent commemoration comparable to Passover or other biblical festivals.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the establishment of Purim demonstrate that God's ongoing providential acts in history deserve permanent remembrance and celebration?
2. What spiritual disciplines or practices help believers remember and celebrate God's deliverances in personal and corporate history?

Interlinear Text

לְהִי וְתִּשְׁלַחַם	לְקִים	עַשׂ יָמִים	אֵת	
To establish	H5921	H1961	this among them that they should keep	H853
	H6965		H6213	
יּוֹם וְאֵת אַדָּר	אַרְבַּע הַיּוֹם	לְחַדְשָׁה	יּוֹם	
day the fourteenth	H6240	H2320	of the month	H853
H3117	H702		Adar	H3117
בְּכָל בְּזֶה רַקְמַשׁ הַיּוֹם	וְעַשֵּׂר	וְיָמִים	וְיָמִים	
and the fifteenth	H6240	H0	of the same yearly	H8141
H2568		H3605	of the same yearly	H8141

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