

Esther 9:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year;

Analysis

The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year. This verse establishes Purim as perpetual covenant obligation for Jewish people and proselytes. The verb "ordained" (qiymu, וְקִיְּמוּ) means to establish, confirm, or make binding—this is formal covenant language. "Took upon them" (viiqibelu, וַיִּקְּבְּלוּ) means to receive or accept willingly, indicating voluntary commitment rather than imposed duty.

The scope extends across three groups: the present generation ("them"), future descendants ("their seed," zaram, זָרָעַם), and Gentile converts ("all such as joined themselves unto them," kol-hanilvim aleihem, כָּל־הַנִּלְוִים אֲלֵיהֶם). This inclusive formulation parallels covenant language elsewhere in Scripture, particularly the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants that bound not only the original recipients but their descendants. The mention of proselytes reflects both historical reality—Gentiles converting to Judaism (8:17)—and theological principle that covenant blessings and responsibilities extend to all who join God's people.

"So as it should not fail" (velo yaavor, וְלֹא יַעֲבוֹר) literally means "and it shall not

pass away"—emphatic language ensuring perpetuity. The specificity regarding "these two days" (14th and 15th of Adar), "according to their writing" (Esther and Mordecai's letters), and "according to their appointed time every year" establishes precise parameters preventing the commemoration from becoming vague or neglected. This detailed prescription demonstrates wisdom: without specific requirements, commemorations fade into forgetfulness.

Historical Context

Purim became one of the most beloved Jewish festivals, celebrated continuously from the Persian period through the present day—over 2,500 years. Unlike biblically mandated festivals (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles), Purim originated from historical deliverance rather than Mosaic law, yet achieved equal or greater popular devotion. The Mishnah (Megillah tractate) and Talmud extensively discuss Purim observance, demonstrating its centrality in Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism.

The reference to proselytes ("all such as joined themselves") reflects significant Gentile conversion following Jewish deliverance. Fear of the Jews (8:17) led many to identify with them, and these converts assumed full covenant obligations including festival observance. This pattern appears throughout Scripture: divine deliverance attracts Gentiles to Israel's God (see Rahab, Ruth, Naaman). Purim thus became a witness to God's faithfulness, drawing outsiders to covenant relationship.

The survival of Purim observance despite millennia of diaspora, persecution, and attempted genocide testifies to the vow's effectiveness. Even secular Jews who abandon other practices often maintain Purim celebration, demonstrating the festival's profound role in Jewish identity. The Nazi regime specifically targeted Purim celebrations, recognizing that the festival commemorating Jewish survival from attempted extermination directly challenged their genocidal ideology.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the binding of future generations to remember God's deliverance speak to the importance of transmitting faith to children?
2. In what ways do Christian remembrance practices (baptism, communion) parallel the perpetual covenant obligation of Purim?
3. How should the church respond to God's faithfulness to Jewish people and the ongoing significance of their covenant identity?

Interlinear Text

וְעַל עַלְיָהֶם מִן הַיְּהוּדִים וּקְבָלָהּ קִיְּמָה וְ
ordained and took The Jews upon them and upon their seed
H6965 H6901 H3064 H5921 H5921 H2233

וְעַל לְכָל הַנִּלְוִי יָמִים וְעַלְיָהֶם וְלֹא אֶ
H5921 H3605 and upon all such as joined H5921 H3808
H3867

וְעַבְדֵּי וְלֵהֱיוֹת עֲשֵׂי יָמִים אֶת
themselves unto them so as it should not fail H1961 that they would keep H853
H5674 H6213

שְׁנֵי יָמִים הָאֵלֶּה לְהַזְכִּיר כַּכְתָּבָם
these two days H428 according to their writing
H8147 H3117 H3791

וְכַכֵּן וְשָׁנָה: וְשָׁנָה: בְּכָל שָׁנָה
and according to their appointed time H3605 every year every year
H2165 H8141 H8141

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 56:6 (Parallel theme): Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;

Zechariah 2:11 (Parallel theme): And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

Isaiah 56:3 (Parallel theme): Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.

Esther 8:17 (Parallel theme): And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.