

Esther 9:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim.

Analysis

Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim. Esther and Mordecai jointly author a second letter establishing Purim with full royal and communal authority. The specific identification of Esther as "the daughter of Abihail" (her adoptive father, 2:15) rather than "queen" alone emphasizes her Jewish identity—she writes not merely as Persian royalty but as a member of the covenant community establishing observance for her own people.

"Mordecai the Jew" (Mordecai hayehudi, מרדכי יהודי) similarly emphasizes ethnic-religious identity. Throughout Esther, Mordecai is repeatedly called "the Jew" (5:13, 6:10, 8:7, 9:29, 9:31, 10:3), marking him as representative of his people and highlighting that Jewish identity drove the entire conflict. The phrase "wrote with all authority" (vatikhov et kol-toqef, ותכתב את כל-תקף) literally means "wrote with all strength/power"—indicating legally binding, authoritative decree carrying full weight of Persian imperial administration and Esther's royal position.

"This second letter" (haigeret hazot hasheniyit, היגרת ה zweite) refers to a follow-up communication beyond Mordecai's initial letter (9:20-22). The first established Purim observance; this second letter confirms and reinforces it with added authority from Esther's co-authorship and royal seal. The dual authorship—Esther from royal position, Mordecai from administrative authority—ensured maximum credibility and compliance.

Historical Context

The concept of establishing new religious observances raised potential concern in Jewish communities bound by Mosaic law. How could humans institute new festivals beyond those divinely ordained? Rabbinic interpretation addressed this by distinguishing between biblical festivals (Torah-mandated) and rabbinic festivals (instituted by legitimate authority based on historical events). Purim became the paradigmatic "rabbinic festival," establishing precedent for later additions like Hanukkah.

Esther's royal position as Persian queen gave her unique authority to establish policy affecting Jews throughout the empire. No Jewish woman had ever held such power, and her willingness to use this influence for her people's benefit rather than personal comfort demonstrates the providence that elevated her "for such a time as this" (4:14). The collaboration with Mordecai, now second-in-command to the king (10:3), meant Purim had endorsement from the two most powerful officials in the Persian Empire who were also committed members of the Jewish community.

Ancient Near Eastern letters of authority followed specific formulae and protocols. The reference to "all authority" or "all strength" indicates this letter bore full legal standing under Persian law, including the royal seal and proper administrative procedures. This ensured Purim's establishment not as voluntary custom but as binding observance with imperial backing throughout Persian territories.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Esther's use of her position to establish lasting blessing for her people model faithful stewardship of influence?
2. In what ways can believers leverage whatever authority or platform they possess for kingdom purposes rather than personal gain?
3. What does the collaborative leadership of Esther and Mordecai teach about partnership in ministry and shared authority?

Interlinear Text

וְמִרְצָכִים	אֲבִיכָם	וְאֶל	בַת	הַמֶּלֶךְ	הָאִשָּׁתְּ רִ	וְתְּכַתְּבָ
wrote	Then Esther	the queen	the daughter	of Abihail	and Mordecai	
H3789	H635	H4436	H1323	H32	H4782	
the Jew	with all authority	to confirm	letter	of Purim		
H3064	H8633	H6965	H853	H107	H6332	
בְּזַאת	כֹּל אֶת	תְּקַרְבָּה	לְקַרְבָּם	אֶת אֶת	יְמֵי פֶּרֹעָם	
H2063	H3605	H8145	H2063	H3605	H8145	

Additional Cross-References

Esther 9:20 (Parallel theme): And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far.

Esther 2:15 (Parallel theme): Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.

Esther 8:10 (Parallel theme): And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries:

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org