

Esther 9:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry.

Analysis

To confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry. This verse specifies the letter's purpose and content. "To confirm" (lekayem, לְקַיֵּם) uses the same root as verse 27 ("ordained"), emphasizing formal establishment and binding authority. The phrase "in their times appointed" (bizmaneihem, בִּזְמָנֵיכֶם) indicates specific dates—14th and 15th of Adar—preventing vagueness that would dilute observance.

The dual authority "according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them" emphasizes both ethnic-religious leadership (Mordecai as representative Jew) and political power (Esther as Persian queen). This combination of spiritual authority with governmental backing ensured compliance across diverse Jewish communities who might otherwise have debated the legitimacy of establishing new festivals. The verb "enjoined" (qiyemu, קִיְּמָה) means established, ordained, or charged—formal covenant language indicating binding obligation.

The phrase "as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed" indicates Jewish communities' voluntary acceptance beyond mere royal command. The people themselves committed to perpetual observance, making Purim both

externally authorized and internally embraced. Finally, "the matters of the fastings and their cry" (divrei hatzomot vezaaqatam, דיברי הצום וזעקהם) references the mourning and supplication that preceded deliverance (4:1-3, 4:16), integrating both celebration of rescue and remembrance of the threat that necessitated it.

Historical Context

The reference to fasting as part of Purim observance became formalized in Jewish tradition as the Fast of Esther (Ta'anit Esther), observed on 13 Adar—the day before Purim begins. This fast commemorates the Jewish people's preparation for their defensive battle (9:1-2) and Esther's three-day fast before approaching the king (4:16). The integration of fasting with feasting creates pedagogical balance: remembering peril deepens appreciation for deliverance.

The phrase "their cry" (zaaqatam, זעקהם) recalls the Jewish people's outcry upon learning of Haman's decree (4:1-3) and connects to Israel's cry in Egyptian bondage (Exodus 2:23, 3:7, 3:9). This linguistic connection links Purim deliverance to Exodus redemption, positioning the Esther events within Israel's ongoing salvation history. Just as God heard Israel's cry in Egypt and delivered them, He heard their cry under Persian persecution and rescued them through Esther and Mordecai.

Rabbinic tradition developed extensive Purim liturgy and practices around themes of this verse: reading the Megillah (Esther scroll) publicly, sending food gifts to friends (mishloach manot), giving to the poor (matanot la'evyonim), and festive meals. These practices create multi-dimensional observance engaging Scripture reading, community generosity, and joyful celebration—ensuring Purim's perpetuation across generations through participatory, memorable activities.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does integrating remembrance of crisis (fasting, cry) with celebration of deliverance create more meaningful thanksgiving?
2. In what ways can personal and communal spiritual commitments be structured to ensure transmission to future generations?
3. What practices help believers maintain awareness of spiritual danger while celebrating God's faithfulness and protection?

Interlinear Text

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|-------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| בְּאָשָׁר | בְּזִמְנִים | בְּאַלְהָ | בְּיָמִים | בְּיָמִים | בְּזִמְנִים |
| To confirm | H853 | these days | of Purim | H428 | in their times |
| H6965 | | H3117 | H6332 | | H2165 |
| בְּאַלְהָ | בְּזִמְנִים | מְרֹדֶכָּי | קָהוֹדִי | אֶסְתֵּר | קָהוֹדִי |
| To confirm | H5921 | appointed according as Mordecai | the Jew | and Esther | |
| H6965 | | H4782 | H3064 | | H635 |
| בְּאַלְהָ | בְּנִפְשָׁתָם | בְּעַל | בְּעַל | בְּעַל | בְּעַל |
| the queen | H834 | To confirm | H5921 | for themselves | and for their seed |
| H4436 | | H6965 | | H5315 | |
| בְּאַלְהָ | בְּצִמְנִים | בְּצִמְנִים | בְּצִמְנִים | בְּצִמְנִים | בְּצִמְנִים |
| the matters | of the fastings | and their cry | | | |
| H1697 | H6685 | H2201 | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Esther 4:3 (Parallel theme): And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

Esther 4:16 (Parallel theme): Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

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