

## Esther 8:9-17

Esther 8:9-17 So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in all, to every province in its own script, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language. (10) And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds. (11) By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives; to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, (12) on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. (13) A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province and published for all people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. (14) The couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Shushan the citadel. (15) So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. (16) The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honour. (17) And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

### Questions On The Text

#### What did Mordecai's edict proclaim?

Verses 9-14: Unable to cancel the original edict that Haman drafted, the new edict would somehow have to nullify its effects. The need to put an appropriate amount of thought into its wording might explain why there was a gap of over two months between Haman's edict and Mordecai's edict (Cf. 3:12 and 8:9).

Although Mordecai's edict mostly reflected the wording of Haman's edict, only this time giving the power to the Jews, there are still significant differences. First, the Jews were specifically addressed and the edict was also translated into their language.

Second, the importance of the proclamation was underscored by the fact that horses specially bred for speed were used. Third, the Jews were permitted not only to defend themselves, but to take vengeance on their attackers by annihilating them and their families and plundering their property. No doubt this was an added incentive to would-be attackers to practise self-control.

#### What was the response to Mordecai's decree?

Verses 15-17: In response to Mordecai's decree, there was general rejoicing in Shushan, especially among the Jews. This was in stark contrast to Haman's decree which produced confusion in the general population and mourning among the Jews (see 3:15-4:3).

Hearing of the drastic change in their circumstances, the Jews were now feasting and holidaying. Many of the empire's inhabitants converted to Judaism (at least outwardly!) because of their fear of the Jews. No doubt this was because they had noted the complete turnaround in their situation and attributed it to the God of the Jews.

## **Further Questions For Discussion:**

How did Mordecai handle Haman's edict?

Do you think that Mordecai's edict was just since it allowed the Jews to kill men, women and children?

Why was the city of Shushan so jubilant over the turn of events?

What motivated people of the land to become Jews? Do you think that those kinds of motives result in genuine conversions?