

These Days of Purim Should Never Cease to be Celebrated by the Jews

9: 26b-28

DIG: *Purim* is a most revered Jewish festival, celebrated to this day. Why? How was it first established? How did it get its name? Why is *Purim* celebrated for two days (see verse 27)? What customs make *Purim* different from all the other Jewish festivals? In recounting the story, why do you suppose the Holy Spirit chose to start with Haman's plot, instead of "at the beginning," with Esther's rise to prominence?

REFLECT: How is the feast of Purim a message of hope to you? What does it say to you, and what should it say to the world, that the feast of Purim has indeed been celebrated without fail from the days of King Ahasuerus until now?

The letter did no more than reinforce and regulate what Jewish people everywhere had begun spontaneously to practice (9:19). As a result of the deliverance of the Jews from Haman and his followers they made a commitment to remember this event forever. They had almost been destroyed as a people. They could not take their existence for granted any longer. The feast would be celebrated annually. Verses 24 to 28 give a brief summary of the whole episode. The story, as it were, is telescoped.

Therefore, because of everything written in this letter (9:20-22) and because of what they had seen and what had happened to them by being attacked, they were more than ready to remember Purim every year (9:26b). Their personal experience of being saved by Mordecai's counter-decree (see Bi), made them all the more willing to accept Purim as a permanent feast. To the oppressed it brings a message of hope.

The Jews of that generation who had been delivered took it on themselves to establish the custom for themselves and their descendants. The celebration of Purim seems to be regarded by the author as a community decision. And not only for the Jews, but for all who join them, literally, *all the ones attaching themselves on them* (in other words, proselytes to the Jewish faith) should without fail observe these two days every year. Meaning Gentile converts to Judaism would also be bound to keep this feast.

In the way prescribed and at the time appointed (9:27). Mordecai's letter had instructed them to observe the feast of Purim on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar (9:21). In addition to the feasting and gladness, sending of food and gifts to the poor, which are prescribed in *the Megillah*, the following observances are obligatory on Purim: the reading of *the Megillah*, evening and morning, with its accompanying blessings and hymns (women are obligated to attend the reading, since it was through a woman that the deliverance was accomplished), and one festive meal towards the evening of the fourteenth (*Se'udath Purim*). *The Megillah* is read with a traditional chant that is distinct from that used in reading the Pentateuch or the *Haphtarah*. In the course of the centuries, as well, many more observances became customary (see Bv - [The Feast of Purim in Judaism](#)).

These days should be remembered by reading *the Megillah*, and according to the famous Rabbi Rashi, observed with feasts, gladness, food and gifts in every generation by every family, and in every province and in every city (9:28a). Purim is still celebrated by the Jews on the fourteenth day of Adar, which on our calendar varies from February to March. In some places that were walled cities in the days of Joshua they celebrate on the fifteenth day of Adar, called Susa Purim (see By - [The Susa Purim](#)). The thirteenth day of Adar is the fast of Esther (see Bw - [The Fast of Esther](#)).

And these two days of Purim should never fail to be celebrated by the Jews - nor should the memory of these days die out among their descendants (9:28b). *The rabbis teach that even if all the seven of the festivals of Isra'el should be annulled, Purim will never be annulled (Midrash)*. All those who love the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob everywhere should remember it continually.

The threat that had been intended to annihilate the Jewish race in Persia became an occasion for unifying it. And the occasion that unified them was Purim. When they were scattered all over the world, the children of Abraham participated in the festival of Purim and have maintained their distinctiveness from March 8-9, 473 BC until now.