

ESTHER 8: 1 On that day, King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the Jews' enemy, to Esther the queen. Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was to her.

Ahasuerus invests Mordecai with the offices and dignities possessed by Haman, Est 8:1, Est 8:2. Esther begs that the decree of destruction gone out against the Jews may be reversed, Est 8:3-6. He informs her that the acts that had once passed the king's seal cannot be reversed; but he instructs her and Mordecai to write other letters in his name, and seal them with his seal, and send them to all the provinces in the empire, giving the Jews full liberty to defend themselves; which is accordingly done; and the letters are sent off with the utmost speed to all the provinces: in consequence, the Jews prepare for their own defense, Est 8:8-14. Mordecai appears publicly in the dress of his high office, Est 8:15. The Jews rejoice in every place; and many of the people become Jews, because the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them, Est 8:16, Est 8:17.

Verse 1

The king - give the house of Haman - As Haman was found guilty of treasonable practices against the peace and prosperity of the king and his empire, his life was forfeited and his goods confiscated. And as Mordecai had been the means of preserving the king's life, and was the principal object of Haman's malice, it was but just to confer his property upon him, as well as his dignity and office, as Mordecai was found deserving of the former, and fit to discharge the duties of the latter.

ESTHER 8: 2 The king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

Verse 2

The king took off his ring - In the ring was the seal of the king. Giving the ring to Mordecai was tantamount to giving him the seal of the kingdom, and constituting him the same as lord chancellor among us.

ESTHER 8: 3 Esther spoke yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and begged him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews.

ESTHER 8: 4 Then the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre. So Esther arose, and stood before the king.

ESTHER 8: 5 She said, "If it pleases the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right to the king, and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.

ESTHER 8: 6 For how can I endure to see the evil that would come to my people? How can I endure to see the destruction of my relatives?"

Verse 6

To see the destruction of my kindred? - She had now informed the king that she was cousin to Mordecai, and consequently a Jewess; and though her own life and that of Mordecai were no longer in danger, Haman being dead, yet the decree that had gone forth was in full force against the Jews; and if not repealed, their destruction would be inevitable.

ESTHER 8: 7 Then King Ahasuerus said to Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, "See, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged on the gallows, because he laid his hand on the Jews.

ESTHER 8: 8 Write also to the Jews, as it pleases you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring; for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may not be reversed by any man."

Verse 8

May no man reverse - Whatever had passed the royal signet could never be revoked; no succeeding edict could destroy or repeal a preceding one: but one of a similar nature to the Jews against the Persians, as that to the Persians was against the Jews, might be enacted, and thus the Jews be enabled legitimately to defend themselves; and, consequently, placed on an equal footing with their enemies.

ESTHER 8: 9 Then the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month Sivan, on the twenty-third day of the month; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded to the Jews, and to the satraps, and the governors and princes of the provinces which are from India to Ethiopia, one hundred twenty-seven provinces, to every province according to its writing, and to every people in their language, and to the Jews in their writing, and in their language.

Verse 9

The month Sivan - This answers to a part of our May and June.

ESTHER 8: 10 He wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by courier on horseback, riding on royal horses that were bred from swift steeds.

Verse 10

On mules, camels, and young dromedaries - What these beasts were is difficult to say. The word רכש *rechesh*, which we translate mules, signifies a swift chariot horse.

The strange word אחשתרנים achashteranim is probably a Persian word, but perhaps incurably corrupted. The most likely derivation is that of Bochart, from the Persian akhash, huge, large, rough, and aster, a mule; large mules.

The words בני הרמכים beney harammachim, the sons of mares, which we translate dromedaries, are supposed to signify mules, produced between the he ass and the mare, to distinguish them from those produced between the stallion and the ass, But there is really so much confusion about these matters, and so little consent among learned men as to the signification of these words, and even the true knowledge of them is of such little importance, that we may well rest contented with such names as our modern translations have given us. They were, no doubt, the swiftest and hardiest beasts that the city or country could produce.

ESTHER 8: 11 In those letters, the king granted the Jews who were in every city to gather themselves together, and to defend their life, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, their little ones and women, and to plunder their possessions,

Verse 11

To destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish - The same words as in Haman's decree: therefore the Jews had as much authority to slay their enemies, as their enemies had to slay them.

Little ones and women - This was the ordinary custom, to destroy the whole family of those convicted of great crimes; and whether this was right or wrong, it was the custom of the people, and according to the laws. Besides, as this edict was to give the Jews the same power against their enemies as they had by the former decree against them, and the women and children were there included; consequently they must be included here.

ESTHER 8: 12 on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.

ESTHER 8: 13 A copy of the letter, that the decree should be given out in every province, was published to all the peoples, that the Jews should be ready for that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

ESTHER 8: 14 So the couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. The decree was given out in the citadel of Susa.

Verse 14

The decree was given at Shushan - The contrary effect which it was to produce considered, this decree was in every respect like the former. See Est 3:8-15.

ESTHER 8: 15 Mordecai went out of the presence of the king in royal clothing of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a robe of fine linen and purple; and the city of Susa shouted and was glad.

Verse 15

Blue and white - Probably stripe interchanged with stripe; or blue faced and bordered with white fur.

A great crown of gold - A large turban, ornamented with gold, jewels, etc.

Fine linen and purple - See on Gen 41:42 (note). The $\gamma\beta$ but, here mentioned, is most probably the same with the byssus of the ancients; supposed to be the beautiful tuft or beard, growing out of the side of the pinna longa, a very large species of muscle, found on the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, of which there are a pair of gloves in the British Museum. This byssus I have described elsewhere.

Shushan - was glad - Haman was too proud to be popular; few lamented his fall.

ESTHER 8: 16 The Jews had light, gladness, joy, and honour.

ESTHER 8: 17 In every province, and in every city, wherever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had gladness, joy, a feast, and a good day. Many from among the peoples of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews was fallen on them.

Verse 17

Many - became Jews; for - fear - These were a species of converts not likely to bring much honor to true religion: but the sacred historian states the simple fact. They did profess Judaism for fear of the Jews, whether they continued steady in that faith or not.

It is only the Gospel which will not admit of coercion for the propagation and establishment of its doctrines. It is a spiritual system, and can be propagated only by spiritual influence. As it proclaims holiness of heart and life, which nothing but the Spirit of God can produce, so it is the Spirit of God alone that can persuade the understanding and change the heart. If the kingdom of Christ were of this world, then would his servants fight. But it is not from hence.