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Mordecai Told Them to Celebrate Annually on the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Days of Adar 9: 20-22

Mordecai told them to celebrate annually on the fourteenth and fifteenth days fo Adar DIG: Why do some say Purim is not really a holiday? What was the purpose of Mordecai's letter to the provinces? How often did Mordecai say the feast should be celebrated? Why? When do Jews celebrate Purim today? How do those in walled cities at the time of Joshua celebrate differently from those unwalled cities? In what three ways do those who love the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob celebrate Purim today? What kind of special food is eaten on Purim?

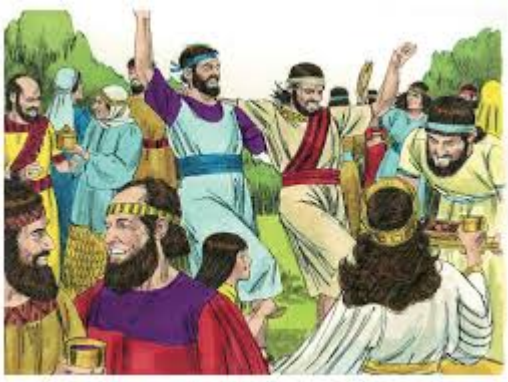
REFLECT: What event in your life has turned sorrow into joy? Do you celebrate it? Do you share it with others? Purim is a day for giving … to one another and the poor. What prompts you to give to others? Especially the poor? What relief from your enemies have you experienced lately? What relief are you still seeking?

The Torah did not establish the feast of **Purim** because it was **Mordecai** who **recorded these events (9:20a). Rabbi Rashi understood the phrase these events as referring to the whole book, and considered Mordecai to have been the author of Esther. But the words need not have this meaning, and a better translation would be, "the following words."** Because it was not a Levitical holiday designated by Moses, some said it was not really a holiday. **But the rabbis had a saying: the flu is no illness and Purim is no holiday.**

And Mordecai sent a letter to all the Jews in each **province of King Ahasuerus, near and far** concerning the observance of **Purim (9:20b).** This is a different letter than the one he had sent earlier **(8:9)** to the provincial officials informing them that **the Jews** had the right to defend themselves against attack. This **letter** was sent solely to **the Jewish people**. **He** had great authority and the efficient postal system made good communication possible.

Mordecai resolved the possible conflict over what day the celebration was to occur by declaring that *both* days should be celebrated. As soon as **Mordecai** heard that **the fourteenth** had seen celebrations all over the empire, but **the Jews** in **Susa** celebrated on **the fifteenth**, **he** solved the possible disagreement. **They** were **to celebrate** the feast **annually** on **the fourteenth *and* fifteenth days of the month of Adar (9:21). After this verse we would expect another verse giving the law of Susa Purim that those who dwell in walled cities keep the fifteenth of Adar. This law is not explicitly stated in the *Megillah*, but is implied in verses 19 and 21. The rabbis determined that cities walled since the days of Joshua were under the obligation to observe Purim on the fifteenth of Adar. The** Talmudic Tractate ***Megillah*** also **gives instructions for observing the feast of Purim; the roll of Esther was to be read in unwalled cities on the eleventh, twelfth and either the thirteenth or fourteenth of Adar and in walled cities on the fifteenth.**

Once established, **Purim** was to be celebrated annually on two consecutive days. This can be understood in one of two ways. Either all **Jewish** people everywhere were to celebrate on both days, because originally a part of **the Jewish** community had celebrated on each day, or **Jewish** people should celebrate **Purim** on the one day appropriate to where they lived, whether in a walled or unwalled location. Today, **Jews** around the world celebrate **Purim** on one day, **Adar 14**, except those living in one of the cities traditionally considered walled at the time of **Joshua**, which include Jerusalem, Hebron and Jericho, where **Purim** is celebrated on **Adar 15**.[114]



Future generations would be given an annual reminder of the wonderful deliverance from extinction. For it **was the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration (9:22a).** No religious ceremonies are

required. It is represented as a secular festival, in keeping with clearly non-religious tone of the narrative. This remains the essential character of the festival in Judaism. The most significant addition to the customs required is the reading of the roll, ***the Megillah***, of **Esther**.[115]

He wrote them to observe the feast **in three ways**. **First**, **they** were to make them **days of feasting and joy**, not fasting and sorrow; **secondly**, **they** should give **presents of food one to another**, instead of having **their** possessions taken away; and **thirdly**, **they** should send **gifts to the poor (9:22b). The rabbis teach that gifts should be given to at least two poor people (Talmud).** Various Jewish holidays have special **foods** associated with them and **Purim** is no exception. The **Purim foods** are based on this verse. There are five different **foods** customary on these **days of feasting**.

The most customary **food** is a triangular pastry known as *hamantashen.* No one really knows where this word came from, but there are three suggested meanings. Some believe it means “Haman’s hat,” which was a three-cornered hat; some believe it means “Haman’s pockets,” which were stuffed with bribes; and some believe it means “Haman’s ears,” because his ears were supposedly cut off as punishment. The *hamantashen* is a **Jewish** pastry that is shaped in a triangle. Initially, it was filled with poppy seeds, but later it was also filled with prunes. Today, both poppy and prune *hamantashen* are eaten on **Purim**.

A second customary **food** for **Purim** is called *kreplach.* It is like **Jewish** ravioli, or pasta filled with chopped meat and mixed with spices such as onion or garlic. It is also a three-cornered pastry that is eaten on **Purim** eve. The chopped meat symbolizes being flogged, because there was an old custom of flogging oneself before **Purim**.

A third customary dish is beans, cooked with salt, because it was believed to be the diet that **Esther** survived on in the court of **the king**. The **Jewish** tradition is that **she** ate this **food** so as not to break any kosher laws.

A fourth customary meal for this feast is turkey. This is based upon its Russian and Hebrew name. In Russia, turkey is called *the cock of India;* in Hebrew it is called *the chicken of India.* The Hebrew word for turkey and the Hebrew word for India is the same. Turkey is eaten to remember that the king ruled from Ethiopia to India.

The fifth food is called *keylitsh.* This is the Jewish egg bread, also eaten on the

Sabbath. It is a large, braided loaf of white bread, but this one is decorated with raisins, and the top is braided with long strands. The strands are wide and high in the middle but narrow and low at both ends to symbolize the long rope used to hang Haman.[116]

This custom of sending **presents of food**, the Hebrew word *manot*, to friends and neighbors of **Purim** also symbolizes what God has destined for His **people**. The Hebrew word *manot,* translated **presents of food** in **9:22b**, is the same word translated **portion** in **Psalm 16:5**, where we read: **LORD, you have assigned me my portion** *(manah)* **and my cup; you have made my lot** *(goral)* **secure.** In the Hebrew poetic parallelism of this verse, *manah* in the first colon is used to refer to the same destiny as *goral* in the second colon. But the Hebrew word *manah* has a second meaning to refer to choice morsels of **food**. For example, in **Second Chronicles 31:4,** Hezekiah commands that **portions of food** be given to the priests and Levites so they can minister before the LORD without having to work in the fields. **He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion** *(manah)* **due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Torah of ADONAI.** As a result, the use of the word *manah* in **Esther 9:22** forms a play on words, as **the Jews** send these **portions of food** *(manot)* to one another to celebrate **their portion** *(manah)* allotted *(goralam)* by God.[117]

Dear Heavenly Father, Praise how you wisely protected the entire Jewish line at the time of ***Esther****. You had promised to bless the world thru Abraham.* ***My desire is to bless those who bless you, but whoever curses you I will curse,and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:3).*** *Your plan/purpose being to bless the world thru the Jewish Messiah.* ***The plan of the fullness of times is to bring all things together in the Messiah – both things in heaven and things on earth, all in Him (Ephesians 1:10).***

What a great love You have that Your choice of who enters heaven is Yes for all who are "In Messiah". ***In Messiah we also were chosen, predestined according to His plan. He keeps working out all things according to the purpose of His will – so that we, who were first to put our hope in Messiah, might be for His glorious praise (Ephesians 1:11-12).*** *You are so wise and loving! All who live with You in heaven must be holy and only You are holy, so You graciously gave Yeshua's perfect righteousness to all who love You****. He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).*** *Yeshua died as*

the perfect sacrificial Lamb of God. ***The next day, John sees Yeshua coming to him and*** *says:* ***Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29). He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we, removed from sins, might live for righteousness. "By His wounds you were healed" (First Peter 2:24).***

Praise Your mighty resurrection power for Yeshua and for all who are in Him. ***For if we have become joined together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also will be joined together in His resurrection (Romans 6:5).*** *Thank You for choosing us not by our works or by our money but before the creation of the world you had already planned to make Your choice to be all who love You and so are "In Messiah."* ***He chose us in the Messiah before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love. He predestined us for adoption as sons through Messiah Yeshua, in keeping with the good pleasure of His will – to the glorious praise of His grace, with which He favored us through the One He loves (Ephesians 1:4-6)!***

How awesome that all who are "In Messiah" receive eternal life ***(John 3:36)*** *and live with You forever in heaven* ***(Revelation 21:1-4, John 14:1-3).*** *It is so wonderful that You give your very presence right now on earth to those who choose to love and to follow You.* ***I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper so He may be with you forever – the Spirit of truth . . . Yeshua answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him" (John 14:16-17a, 23). After you heard the message of truth – the Good News of your salvation – and when you put your trust in Him, you were sealed with the promised Ruach Ha'Kodesh. He is the guarantee of our inheritance, until the redemption of His possession – to His glorious praise (Ephesians 1:13-14)!***

What rejoicing there is each year on Purim for Your protection of Your people, and rejoicing for all the spiritual blessings God gives those who love him and are "In Messiah." ***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Messiah (Ephesians 1:4).*** *There will be eternal rejoicing by both Jews and Gentiles who live eternally in heaven because they have accepted Messiah's sacrificial death and resurrection and lovingly follow Him. For Yeshua came* ***to reconcile both to God in one body through the cross – by which He put the***

hostility to death. And He came and proclaimed shalom to you who were far away and shalom to those who were near – for through Him we both have access to the Father by the same Ruach (Ephesians 2:16-18). *Your children* ***(John 1:12)*** *rejoice over Your great love! In Yeshua's holy name and power of resurrection. Amen*