



סלה Selah

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The message of Esther: Revealed, or – sadly - still concealed?

The Purim story blows any Hollywood script out of the water! It includes everything: action, espionage, romance, betrayal, intrigue, suspense and triumph! But what sets it apart from all other stories is this: it actually happened!

While the name 'Esther' is Persian for 'Star', and also comes from the pagan goddess 'Ishtar', some also draw out a connection between her name (אסתר) and the Hebrew 'I will hide' (אסתר אסתר Deut. 31:18; God 'will hide' His face), and this book is known for the absence of the name of God! But while God's Name is 'hidden', the story of Esther is profoundly spiritual and the Hand of God can be clearly seen. That is why Hamentaschen, the traditional pastry eaten at Purim, is made with the filling *mostly* concealed. Biblical truths are not restricted to time, so let's examine this book's specific message for us today.

In recent decades, there was a revival of understanding God's purposes for Israel, with a renewed interest in the book of Esther in order to regain the truth of the importance of intercession on behalf of the Jewish people. As important as this has been, though, I personally found something lacking in the typology that some attempted to apply to the personages. For instance, some have tried to view Ahasuerus as God because Esther appeals to him. But would 'God' be so weak in character, in the other situations, as Ahasuerus was?

In this article, I would like to offer my own meditations, hoping that we may derive instruction for today.

In the Hebrew, we find vivid, spiritual language: Mordecai would not prostrate himself (לא ישתחווה) – i.e. worship – Haman, as a god) and wouldn't listen (לא שמוע) - Shema) to the others (Esther 3:2,4). I view Mordecai as symbolic of Israel.

Esther, was nurtured and 'raised' (האמן from the word – אמן – faith, amen) by her cousin, Mordecai.

Even though she is clearly related to Mordecai, her lineage is 'concealed' and she is only ever referred to as 'Esther, the queen'.

Later, she refers to the Jewish people 'her people', as Ruth does (Ruth 1:16). I suggest that Esther represents the entire Church in its journey to maturity, rather than representing an intercessory *segment* of the Church, as some have suggested. (I find it sad that a large portion of the church views intercessory prayer as a practice for a 'select fringe', rather than the glorious privilege of the entire Church.)

I submit that Ahasuerus represents the world system; the *anti-type* of 'God Most High'. He is controlled and manipulated by 'Haman', who represents the spiritual forces of wickedness in high places. Ahasuerus was heavily influenced by the magicians that he surrounded himself with (ch. 1:13) and Haman was deeply involved in occult

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practices, casting lots *for the entire year* in order to determine the best time to destroy the Jewish people (ch. 3:7). Haman's own design for being honoured (ch. 6:8) exhibits the same spirit as Lucifer, in Isaiah 14: 14, by wanting to be seen in the king's robe and crown and riding his horse!

When the threat of destruction reared its chronic head, Mordecai raised his cries and put on sackcloth. Esther tried to silence Mordecai by sending clothing out to him, but he wasn't having it! The problem could not be dealt with superficially. It required ultimate sacrifice and this is where, I believe, the crunch really comes – even for those who already DO love the Jewish people and understand God's purposes for them! I'll try to put it as succinctly as I can:

Esther, though queen, still had to attain to God's authority in order to confront and expose the powers of darkness behind the wicked plan to destroy the Jewish people. We only have God's authority when we are ministering under God's authority (Matt. 8:9; Acts 19:15).

This can only come through a total laying down of our own lives and taking up our cross (Matt. 10:38). After her total 3-day fast (symbolic of death and resurrection), she then 'put on the kingdom' (not just robes! Lit. Hebrew: מלכות; i.e. she then had authority and wisdom from God, by which she was able to expose the plans and the powers of darkness and overcome the plot.) In the matter of the salvation of Jewish people, this is paramount!

Moses, in seeking the Lord's salvation of Israel said, 'if not, blot me out of your Book' (Ex. 32:32). Paul, in realising the central importance of Israel's salvation in the plan of God, said, 'I say this *in Messiah* (so, not in his own emotion!)...I could wish myself accursed for my kinsmen...' (Rom. 9:3). Esther, in being shown the significance of her position in the kingdom for such a critical time, had

to come to, 'if I perish, I perish' (ch. 4:16).

Haman was a descendant of Agag, king of the Amalekites (I Sam. 15:8,32). In Exodus 17, even though God promised to eventually blot out Amalek from under heaven, we read in v. 16: 'For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn *that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.*'

This is the purpose of the Church in every generation – described by Paul as a 'mystery' in the book of Ephesians and elsewhere. A 'mystery' is something revealed that was once 'concealed'! Paul's instruction to the Ephesians ends with detailed instruction in spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-20).

Sadly, very few within the Church understand the mystery of the Church and Israel, as described by Paul in Romans 11. And yet, this is the one mystery of which Paul said that he would not have us ignorant! Any amount of ignorance of this mystery produces pride and conceit, leading to wrong wisdom and behaviour. Furthermore, very few of the ones who do seem to understand it have entered into the fullness of its truth because it is costly! Nothing less than a complete laying down of our lives will do! This is why Paul begins Romans 12 with the words: 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye *present your bodies* a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world...'

This is not just something for mental assent or lip service. Amalek (anti-Semitism) is with us in every generation.

We see the same spirits that were active through Hitler's Germany rising up again, only now with even worse potential, in this 'global village'!

Esther put her life completely in God's hands and laid down the wisdom and dictates of the world ('there is one law...I

have not been called in 30 days...’ Est. 4:11). Only an ‘Esther’ who is under God’s authority, in an ultimate way, will know the ultimate measure of Divine authority needed to confront the systems – and the underlying demonic spirits – to see Jewish people truly set free. If the Church will not yield to the necessary purifications and confront its areas of impotence, through an ultimate death to self as Esther did, it will lack the necessary resurrection life and spiritual authority it needs from God in its generation and will simply end in becoming a custodian of doctrines and creeds – instead of being a living, victorious Bride with the resultant fruit of ‘all Israel’ being saved, to the glory of God.

A summary of this can be seen in Revelation 12, which contains the bright jewel of verse 11: ‘And they overcame him [satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.’

To reveal God’s Glory and see the salvation of Israel, the Church must become transfigured by restoring the centrality of the Cross in an *altogether* sacrificial way and it is by Israel, and for Israel, that God will ultimately accomplish this.

Beginning with our next issue, we plan to change the name of this magazine, from SELAH to **BESORAH!** Besorah is Hebrew for ‘Good News’, a title that, we feel, better reflects our work. We will share more about this next time. We would love to see you at our Annual Regionall Rallies this year, including our new Rally in the Midlands (notice, below)! We look forward to sharing fellowship with you and pray that you will know the Lord’s blessings and leading for 2019. *Chrissy Rodgers*

