

בשורה *Besorah!*

PURIM - For Such a Time as This

It has been some years since I wrote about Purim in the March issue of our quarterly magazine. The last time I did, I presented my interpretation of each of the characters in the story of Esther. The threatening events that have been unfolding since October 7th, 2023 have understandably prompted many 'Israel' ministries to employ the headline, 'For Such a Time as This'. We are seeing an unprecedented surge in anti-Semitism world-wide and will no doubt see worse, unfortunately, as we move towards Jacob's Trouble (Jer 30:7).

In that previous article, I proposed that Esther represented the Church – not just a segment or intercessory fringe of the Church - but a type of the entire Church in its growth to maturity. We read that Esther was 'raised' (הֶאֱמִין from the word – אָמֵן – amen, from which we get the word 'faith' in Hebrew) by Mordecai (who represents the Jewish people). Like Esther, who is cousin to 'Mordecai, the Jew', the Church was 'brought up', having received her faith through the Jewish people. Even though Esther is clearly related to Mordecai, her lineage is 'concealed' and she is only ever referred to as 'Esther, the queen', while Mordecai is referred to as 'Mordecai, the Jew'. Later, she refers to the Jewish people as 'her people', as Ruth does (Ruth 1:16).

In the story, we find the promotion of Haman. The title 'Agagite' (similar to the title 'Pharaoh' or 'Abimelech') links him to the ancient enemy of the Jewish people. When Mordecai refuses to bow before him, Haman cruelly determines that all Jewish people must be eradicated, no doubt

calculating that his own future political position would be threatened if they survive, if Mordecai's reason for not bowing is anything to go by! He seeks occultic direction and decrees their destruction on the 13th of Nisan – one day before Passover, on the Hebrew calendar.

'When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; and came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth' (Esth 4:1,2).

Esther's response was extreme: she literally writhed (תַּחֲלָחַל). She immediately sent clothing to Mordecai, but he would not receive it. One can only conjecture as to her motive for sending the clothing. Was it to enable him to enter the king's gate, as before, and restore the status quo? Was it to quickly pacify him and so avoid creating a scene? Was it to prevent upsetting any other apple cart? In any case, her remedy fell short and Mordecai wasn't having it!

The exchange and incidents that immediately follow contain the fulcrum for the resulting outcome.

After Mordecai sends reason and evidence for his behaviour, he charges Esther to make supplication to the king. She then explains things from her point of view: She can't enter the court without being summoned or else risks being put to death - and she hasn't been called to the king for 30 days. Mordecai adjures her, 'Think not within thyself...' In Hebrew, this literally reads



Sharing Yeshua with Jewish People worldwide

www.messianictestimony.com

Newsletter of
MESSIANIC TESTIMONY
Spring 2024

‘Be not dumbly-silent-as-from-deafness, in your soul...’ (Esth 4:12). It’s the same verb used in Isaiah 62: 6,7: ‘ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence... And give Him no silence’. Mordecai also adds that a wrong response to Haman’s edict will result in Esther’s destruction, even though the Jewish nation will ultimately survive.

Esther’s reply deserves much consideration: ‘Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish’ (4:16).

Here, we have the nub. Mordecai has exposed Esther’s fear of her husband. Had she begun to fall out of favour with him? Thirty days is a long time – perhaps the longest gap she’s ever experienced. She lacks self-confidence now. But instead of fainting at this expose, she puts her life into the hands of the Lord. God is never mentioned by name in this book, but the instruction to fast is an allusion of great significance. The word itself, along with the accompanying detailed instructions, point to a deep encounter with the Living God. We examined fasting in our Autumn 2023 Besorah, as connected to confession, repentance and atonement for sin and subsequent deliverance for the oppressed.

The situation was urgent, and called not just for abstinence from food for one day, but from *food and drink for three days*! This contains many implications: First of all, normal fasting involves the abstinence from all corporeal enjoyments in order to give ascendancy of the spirit over the clay and better enable one to attain that perfect commune with God which, in urgent situations, is so needed. To do it with a whole heart involves humbling one’s self. However, fasting from all food and water for three days is intense and brings one to the very extremity of physical life itself! While a person can live for several days without food, three days and nights without water is the medically accepted limit for life. Some have written that Esther risked her life by going to the king without being called by him. But I submit that

she didn’t *risk* her life – *she laid it down*, and that took place during the fast she enjoined.

Consider that Mordecai explained Haman’s plan to ‘destroy’ the Jewish people (4:7 אָבַד - abad). He adjured Esther that if she didn’t approach the king, she and her father’s house would be ‘destroyed’ (4:14 אָבַד).

Esther’s answer, which *combined* the fasting instruction with her agreement to approach the king, concluded with the words, ‘if I perish, I perish’ (Literally, ‘if I’m destroyed, I’m destroyed’: אָבַד). This Hebrew word - ‘Abad’ - forms the basis of the name Abaddon of Rev 9:11, the angel of the bottomless pit! Esther’s fast alone could have killed her. But she didn’t say, ‘if I die, I die.’ She used a much stronger, spiritual word (as did Mordecai).

Here we see that an intercessor isn’t just one who can protest or supplicate with the right argument, but one who TRULY lays down their *life* and is willing not just to die, but is willing to take the eternal punishment! We have similar expressions of this in Moses, in the episode of the Golden Calf: ‘And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have *sinned a great sin*, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, *if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book* which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, *whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book*’ (Ex. 32:31-33, emph. mine).

Paul also wrote, ‘I say the truth *in Christ*, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me *witness in the Holy Ghost*, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were *accursed from Christ* for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh’ (Rom 9:1-3, emph. mine). No humanistic, nationalistic sentiments here! He spoke the truth *in Christ*.

While the events in the book of Esther are outworked in the physical realm, they are primarily spiritual. After her fast, we read: ‘it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel (5:1). Hopefully, we already understand the implications of ‘the third day’ as referring to resurrection. As I’ve mentioned before, the Hebrew says literally, ‘she put on the

kingdom’. Spiritually, we only have authority as we are under authority. Luke 7:8 says, ‘For I also am a man **set under authority**, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.’ (emph. mine). Esther found favour and authority in proportion to her submission to God.

Notice the complete change in Esther’s character upon touching the king’s sceptre. Instead of blurting out her real motive for approaching him, she invites the king and Haman to a banquet ‘she has prepared for *him*’ (v.4). At that banquet, the king still wants to know her request. Again, instead of voicing it, she extends an invitation to another banquet ‘she has prepared for *them*’ (v.8)! No impulsive, hasty activity on Esther’s part! Now, she is moving in the peaceful wisdom and strength of the Holy Spirit. With the unfolding of the events that ensue, all is exposed: Mordecai’s loyalty, Esther’s pedigree and Haman’s treachery – and most of all, God’s omnipotence! This would not have happened if Esther had remained in her soulish state, no matter how noble she might have looked or sounded.

I’ve deliberately included the word ‘Purim’ in the title of this article. This is because I wanted to highlight the spiritual, demonic nature of the conflict. Haman was more than just an arrogant, self-promoting man. He consulted the powers of darkness for an entire year in order to achieve maximum success for his plan. Paul wrote to the

Ephesian church – a people who had been saved from worshipping a pagan female deity – ‘For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places’ (Eph 6:12). He also wrote that the believers in Ephesus were included in salvation (i.e., brought into the kingdom), ‘*To the intent* that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known *by the church the manifold wisdom of God*’, (Eph 3:10. Emph mine).

October 7th was a gear change in the prophetic homestretch. To the direct proportion that the church submits herself to the Word of God – and takes up her cross - will she be granted the authority that is needed in these days against the spiritual forces now at work. The goal of the intercessors I have mentioned (Moses, Esther, Paul) was *ultimately the salvation of the Jewish people*. Is this the church’s goal? Is the church up to the task? Where is the reality of the cross (not just a mental ascent to the fact of it) in the life of the church? (I speak to myself, too.) Let us seek the Lord while He may be found and allow His Holy Spirit to search us.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be **glory in the church by Christ Jesus** throughout all ages, world without end. Amen (Eph 3:20-21). Yours, in Yeshua, for the glory of God and the salvation of Jewish people, Chrissy