

Queen Esther and the Festival of Purim

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The video version is available at: <https://youtu.be/kPOKhy3DkQc>

The scripture reading is the Book of Esther

At the time of the Book of Esther, the Jewish people were in captivity in the empire of the Persians. They faced certain destruction—the decree for the genocide of the Jews had been signed and a date for their death was set. They needed a redeemer; they needed a savior. They turned to Esther as one who, as Queen, was able to intercede for them. The story of Esther remembered and celebrated in the Festival of Purim is a powerful foreshadowing of the ultimate redemption of Israel by Yeshua the Messiah.

Esther was chosen to be the queen of Persia after an elaborate procedure designed to pick the most beautiful woman of face and form as well as manner.

Esther 2:7 NKJV 7 And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

Skipping to verse twelve.

Esther 2:12 NKJV 12 Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women.

The word translated beautifying or beautiful also refers to character, literally she was good. And that word is number #2896 in the Strong's concordance towb, meaning good, beautiful, best, better.

The choice of Esther as queen was made by the king. She and the other candidates for queen were presented before the king one by one. When Esther's turn came, she impressed the king with her beauty and demeanor, and he selected her to be queen.

In her role of queen, Esther did not reveal that she was Jewish. She went by her Persian name of Esther instead of her Hebrew name of Hadassah. She lived among the gentiles of the land and they saw her only as their queen. No one, not even the king knew she was Jewish. Once Esther was chosen to be queen, the king called for a celebration.

Esther 2:18,20 NKJV 18 Then the king made a great feast, the Feast of Esther, for all his officials and servants; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces and gave gifts according to the generosity of a king... 20 Now Esther had not revealed her family and her people, just as Mordecai had charged her, for Esther obeyed the command of Mordecai as when she was brought up by him.

Like Esther, Yeshua's identity as a Jew has been hidden. In the second and third century A.D., the believers in Yeshua as Messiah experienced a separation from the greater Jewish faith. Believers were rejected and barred from the synagogues where they had met from the time the Holy Spirit fell. In turn, believers rejected their Jewish brothers who did not believe in Messiah and formed their own sect. They eventually rejected all the Jews and their own Jewish heritage. In time, "Christians" forgot that Yeshua was even Jewish! To the Jewish

people today, Yeshua does not appear to be Jewish and we present Him as if He did not live a Jewish life. He, like Esther, is hidden among the Gentiles with a Gentile name.

When the decree to kill all the Jews was signed and Mordecai learned of it, he urged Esther to intercede for her people. Esther replied that to go before the king without being summoned could mean her death.

Esther 4:10-11 NKJV 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: 11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days."

Mordecai's reply to Esther was that perhaps she was in the position of queen just to save her people.

Esther 4:14 NKJV 14 "For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Esther instructed the people to fast for her for three days before she attempted going before the king. She was willing to risk her life for her people.

Esther 4:16 NKJV 16 "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"

The timing of the event is interesting. The decree to kill the Jews was signed on Nisan 13, the day before Passover.

Esther 3:12 NKJV 12 Then the king's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and a decree was written according to all that Haman commanded-to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province, to the officials of all people, to every province according to its script, and to every people in their language. In the name of King Ahasuerus it was written, and sealed with the king's signet ring.

If the communication between Esther and Mordecai occurred the day after the decree was signed, Nisan 14, the three day fast decreed by Esther would coincide with the dates of Yeshua's death, burial and resurrection. Yeshua died and was buried just before sunset at the end of the day of Nisan 14. He was in the grave two days and on the third day, he rose again.

Luke 24:45-46 NKJV 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,

On the third day of the fast, Esther put on her royal robes and went before the king who was sitting on his throne facing the entrance of the inner court. She entered with trepidation not knowing if she would live or die.

Esther 5:1 NKJV 1 Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house.

The day Esther goes before the king is the Feast of Firstfruits foreshadowing Yeshua's resurrection. Esther is a type of firstfruits from the dead. When the king saw Esther, he favored her and extended his scepter sparing her life. She counted herself as dead accepting that "if I perish, I perish," but the king granted her life back to her.

Esther 5:2 NKJV 2 So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter.

Esther intercedes with the king on behalf of her people after spending a couple of days showing her regard for the king by preparing a banquet for him. She is counted worthy to receive honor from the king even to half his kingdom. She asks for her life and the life of her people and denounces Haman as their enemy.

Esther 7:2-6 NKJV 2 And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!" 3 Then Queen Esther answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. 4 "For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king's loss." 5 So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?" 6 And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!" So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

The king removed the authority he had given to Haman. Haman is then hanged on the very gallows he had erected in anticipation of having Mordecai executed for failing to pay him proper respect.

Like Esther's intercession for her people, Yeshua also intercedes for His people, and by His intercession we are granted redemption.

Hebrews 7:25-26 NKJV 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;

Although Haman was hanged, the decree to kill all the Jews could not be overturned. Esther again goes before the king and pleads for the lives of her countrymen.

Esther 8:7-8 NKJV 7 Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he tried to lay his hand on the Jews. 8 "You yourselves write a decree concerning the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke."

In like manner, the sentence of death hangs over all people because of the sin of Adam. The decree cannot be overturned.

Romans 5:14 NKJV 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Because of Esther's faithfulness, a new decree is given. The Jews were granted the right to defend themselves and official letters were sent out.

Esther 8:11-12 NKJV 11 By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives-to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, 12 on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

This new decree went out in all the languages of the people in the month of Sivan just after the Feast of Weeks, also known as Pentecost. During the Feast of Weeks after Yeshua's ascension, the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples, and they spoke in the languages of all the people gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast.

Acts 2:1-6 NKJV 1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.

However, the day on which the Jewish people can defend themselves is still almost nine months away.

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

The decree for their redemption has been sealed and delivered but the day is not yet come. In a similar way, the redemption of Israel and all mankind has been sealed and delivered but the day has not yet come. In the book of Revelation, Yeshua, the Lamb of God, is the only one counted worthy to open the scrolls containing the last judgments on man.

Revelation 5:2-5 NKJV 2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. 4 So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. 5 But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

In the time of Esther, many people became Jews because the fear of the Jews "fell on them."

Esther 8:17 NKJV 17 And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

When the end times come, many people will join themselves to the Jews because of the fear of the LORD.

Zechariah 8:23 NKJV 23 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'""

When the appointed day arrived, the enemies of the Jewish people came against them led by the ten sons of Haman. The shadow of Messiah now shifts from Esther to her uncle Mordecai. Esther's role as intercessor fades into the background. Mordecai steps to the forefront as the one who leads the Jewish people to victory.

Esther 9:2-5 NKJV 2 The Jews gathered together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could withstand them, because fear of them fell upon all people. 3 And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and all those doing the king's work, helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them. 4 For Mordecai was great in the king's palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for this man Mordecai became increasingly prominent. 5 Thus the Jews defeated all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did what they pleased with those who hated them.

On another appointed day, yet to take place, Yeshua will return and the victory will belong to God. Those who are enemies of God will be judged.

Revelation 14:14-16 NKJV 14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

The next day, the ten sons of Haman, although they were already dead, are hung on the same gallows as their father Haman.

Esther 9:12-13 NKJV 12 And the king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the citadel, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what is your petition? It shall be granted to you. Or what is your further request? It shall be done." 13 Then Esther said, "If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows."

The ten sons of Haman, through Haman, were given authority by the king for a short time. It was during this time when Haman had the authority of the king that he had the decree written to kill all the Jews.

Esther 3:1, 10 NKJV 1 After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him... 10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.

In the same way, the beast will be given authority to come against the people of God and the ten kings will give their authority over to the beast. Their sole purpose is to destroy God's people.

Revelation 13:6-7 NKJV 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

After their victory over Haman and his followers, the Jewish people held a celebration. The people feasted and gave presents to one another. The days that would have been days of mourning, instead became days of gladness.

Esther 9:20-22 NKJV 20 And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, 21 to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar, 22 as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor.

After Yeshua defeats the nations that come against Jerusalem, the days of mourning will be turned to gladness and cheerful feasts. Even the fast days on which the Jewish people currently mourn the various events leading up to the destruction and captivity of Jerusalem and all Judah by the Babylonians will be turned to days of gladness.

Zechariah 8:19 NKJV 19 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'The fast of the fourth month, The fast of the fifth, The fast of the seventh, And the fast of the tenth, Shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts For the house of Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.'

Through Mordecai's assistance, the kingdom prospered. He watched over and sought the good of his people. In other words, he did not seek his own gain.

Esther 10:3 NKJV 3 For Mordecai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus, and was great among the Jews and well received by the multitude of his brethren, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his countrymen.

When we dig just under the surface of the Story of Esther, we begin to see God's redemption plan spelled out before us in amazing detail. The authority that had been granted to Haman was transferred to Mordecai and the authority given to Satan will already be transferred to Yeshua. We await the day that He will assert that authority and destroy the beast and Satan. Just as Mordecai administered his authority with righteousness and justice, Yeshua, when He reigns on this earth, will reign with justice and righteousness under the authority given to Him by God.

Study Questions:

1. The story of Esther and Mordecai is one of the most powerful shadows of the Messiah in all of scripture. In this teaching we only touched on a few examples. What are other shadows that are contained in the Book of Esther?
2. Haman relied on chance to choose the day to destroy the Jewish people (Est. 3:7). How does this differ from the appointed days of the LORD (Lev. 23 1-3)? Discuss the underlying philosophies of each position.
3. Read Mordecai's words to Esther in Esther 4:13-14. Discuss how this can apply to any believer.
4. The Book of Esther is the only book in the Bible that doesn't mention God even once. He is a hidden player in the events of the book of Esther. Within the book itself, Esther is a hidden player behind the scenes to stop Haman who doesn't know that she is Jewish. How can we apply this idea to today and God, the Father, as well as Yeshua, the Son, acting behind the scenes?
5. The days of Adar which would have been days of sorrow were turned into days of joy (Est. 9:20-22). Read Zechariah 8:19. The fast days written about here all involve the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by

the Babylonians. Discuss the connection between the days of Adar becoming days of joy and the fasts becoming days of joy.

6. What new insight did you gain from this teaching? How do you respond to this new insight? How will you realign your life based on this new understanding?

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