

ESTHER

One of only two books of Scripture named for women.

The other book is the story of Ruth, the Moabite - who married Boaz the grandfather of David. Her story of the story of the Gentiles, who are grafted into Israel because they marry Jeshua.

The story of Esther is the story of Israel/Jerusalem - almost wiped out by a wicked plot, but saved through the courage of Esther and the wise counsel of Mordecai, her cousin who had cared for her, after she was orphaned. The details of this story are amazing, and prophetic!

“For whatever things were written before, were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” (Romans 15:4)

“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” (1Corinthians 10:11)

BACKGROUND:

Our story takes place during the reign of Xerxes I (Ahasuerus) 486-665 BC. He reigned as king of the Persian empire for 19 years.

After **Cyrus** (who released the Jews to return to their land and who gave a large sum of money for rebuilding the Temple @ Jerusalem) **Cambyses** reigned, followed by **Darius I** (of Daniel's time) followed by the **Xerxes** of our story. He was Darius son. The Persian empire had reached its peak during the reign of Darius, who had come to know the God of Heaven, and began a slow decline from that reign forward. As Darius son, we would assume that his father Darius had told him something of the God of Israel. But the character just wasn't there.

Xerxes was known for his love of opulent display, like a prince raised at court. He could be tyrannical and cruel. He was killed in a conspiracy in 465 and was succeeded by his son **Artaxerxes I** (Darius Grandson). The events of Ezra 7 to the end of Nehemiah occurred during the reign of Artaxerxes I. I drew much of this information from *the “New American Commentary” by Mervin*

Breneman.

Haman is a descendant of Agag, the Amalakite king who was spared by King Saul, for which act the LORD gave the kingdom to another man - David. (I Samuel 15)

In the story **Mordecai and Esther** claim to be Jews, because they were citizens of Judah - the Southern kingdom, after the split. But **they were Benjamites** (son of the right hand) -**descended from Shemei, a relative of King Saul**, who cursed David from across the river as David fled from Absalom's advance upon Jerusalem. (II Samuel 16) One of David's captains asked permission of David to "take off the head" of Shimei. If David had given consent, we would not today be studying the story of Esther and her cousin Mordecai.

The ancient hatred between the Amalekites and the Israelites is the current that flows through this story. Amalek was the hateful and violent grandson of Esau. (Son of a concubine of Esau's son.) During the wilderness 40 yr wandering, the Amalekites raided the camp of Israel, always attacking from behind to pick off the weak or the slower.

The Torah portion always read on Purim is Exodus 17:8-16. This is the account of an ancient battle between Israel and the Amalakites.

Joshua (Yeshua) fought with men of Israel, while Moses stood on top of the hill "with the rod of God" in his hand. We all remember the story. So long as Moses held the rod above his head - Israel prevailed. When his arms became tired, and he let the rod down, the Amalakites began to win. So Aaron and Hur held up Moses hands until the going down of the sun. And of course - Yeshua was victorious. If you picture in your mind, Moses - exhausted (he was 80) with his head hanging, seated slumping on a rock, with his arms stretched upward - held to a horizontal rod, you might just see Jesus hanging also from a horizontal bar.

Moses sat on a stone (Hebrew eben or aben). The word is a contraction of two words which mean father/son. So Moses sat on THE stone (Father/Son). He sat on the One who is Father and Son. He is our creator (Father) but He himself is the Son of God, and the Son of Man.

Exodus 17:13-16 "So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that **I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.**" And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner; for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." (NKJ)

Numbers 24:20-25 "Then he (Balaam) looked on Amalek, and he took up his oracle and said: "**Amalek was first among the nations, But shall be last until he perishes.**" Then he looked on the Kenites, and he took up his oracle and said: "Firm is your dwelling place, And your nest is set in the rock; Nevertheless Kain shall be burned. How long until Asshur carries you away Captive?" Then he took up his oracle and said: "Alas! Who shall live when God does this? (NKJV) Ships will come from the shores of Cyprus; they will subdue Ashur (Assyria) and Eber, (?Iran) but they too will come to ruin." (NIV) So Balaam rose and departed and returned to his place; Balak also went

his way.”

Amalek was the “first” of “the nations” to attack Israel after they came up from the Red Sea, as they journeyed to Mt Sinai. (Exodus 17:8-16) They were “first” to attack Israel as they tried to enter Canaan. (Num. 14:45). They were the most powerful of the desert tribes - violent raiders. And they continually harassed and raided Israel during the 40 years wandering.

From the final Words of Moses to Israel:

17 "Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt,

18 "how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God. 19 "Therefore it shall be, **when the LORD your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.** You shall not forget. (Deu 25:17-19 NKJ)

THIS IS A LAST DAY PROPHECY!!! Amalek becomes a symbol of Satan. It would not surprise me at all, to learn that AntiChrist in the last days is descended from Amalek.

NOTE: Through the prophet Samuel the LORD said to Saul,

3 `Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'" (1Sa 15:3 NKJ) Saul failed, because he kept Agag the king as a trophy, and he allowed the people to take booty, including livestock. Samuel “hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord.” For his failure, the Lord replaced Saul with David.

SO -THIS IS THE UNDERCURRENT - BENJAMIN/EPHRAIM VS AMALEK

(Note: Joshua was an Ephraimite.)

CHARACTERS: In order of appearance.

1. **King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I)** - interesting to note that he is served by seven eunuchs - who “served in his presence. (Est 1:10 NKJ) And next below him are “seven princes” “which saw the king’s face.” (Est 1:14) [The seven angels/spirits stand in the presence of God the Father, and serve the Lamb.]
2. **Queen Vashti** - who refuses to come up on the 7th day of a feast. She is replace by “another better than she.” (1:19) (Hosea 2:2) Just so - rebellious Jerusalem is “replaced” by a humbled, repentant, and cleansed New Jerusalem - bride of the true King. We wonder if “the king” who commanded Vashti come unveiled before drunken men, was an evil king. Let me read a passage from the “New American Commentary” by Mervin Breneman, page 308. . .
..
3. **Hegai** - the king’s Eunuch - custodian of the women, who cares especially for Esther giving her the best place in the women’s (virgins) quarters, and 7 maid servants to provide for her. Esther follows his advice in every particular, as she prepares to go in to the king. She was raised

by Mordecai to be obedient and cooperative and respectful.

Cont: Jeremiah had instructed the captives to pray for their captors, and to be obedient to their new masters. [Hegai might be a type of the pre-incarnate Christ who prepares Israel, giving her everything she needs, and instructing her as she prepares for her appointed role.]

4. **Esther (Star)** - Orphaned cousin of Mordecai. Hebrew name Hadassah - (Myrtle)
Adopted and raised by Mordecai. Carried captive into the king's palace.
Chosen to be Queen in place of Vashti. [I think that Esther may represent Israel, but more specifically the righteous remnant of Jerusalem.]
4. **Mordecai** - Descendant of Kish, who was carried in the first wave to Babylon.
A Benjamite. Probably a minor official, because he "sat in the king's gate" where such officials were required to remain. Cousin of Esther, and adoptive father. [He is a kinsman redeemer and is therefore a type of Christ.]
5. **The Assassins:** Bigthan and Teresh who are "doorkeepers." They plot to kill the king and are found out and hanged. Archeology has confirmed that hanging was indeed a method of execution at that time. Bigthan means "in the winepress." and Teresh means "strictness."
They keep people out or admit them to the king. Legalism (righteousness by works) and trials (testing) are definitely the two main barriers which turn the chosen away from the kingdom.
5. **Haman:** He believes in the forces of the universe, so he casts lots, (Pur) to find the day upon which to carry out his plan. The belief in fate was part of the world view that pervaded all the ancient world except Israel. It was based in a kind of pantheistic outlook that sees even the gods themselves, subject to innate "laws" or forces which guide all things (known and unknown).

Archeology has unearthed evidence that the casting of lots was indeed common during this Persian period, and the casting of lots most often took place at the beginning of the year to decide the date for upcoming events. So Haman cast his "lot" in the "first month" of the year - Nisan - on the 13th day. (I'm sure the lot was cast in some sort of pagan ceremony.)

Haman has an ego as big as all outdoors. He wants to be worshiped. He is made second in the kingdom (above the 7 princes). He is given the King's signet ring (authority). The King has commanded that everyone within the "king gates" bow to him. And it riles him to the core that Mordecai won't "bow down" to him!!

The king's servants try to persuade Mordecai but he reveals that he is a Jew and will NOT bow down to an Amalakitite!

Haman offers to pay 10 thousand talents of silver into the treasury of the king, to pay for the privilege of killing the Jews (3:9, 4:7) though Haman does not mention that it IS the Jews he wants to exterminate, which is why Queen Esther later says "we are sold, my people and I." (7:4) We remember, of course, that Jesus was sold for 30 pieces of silver.

NOTE: Haman has ten sons. - The AntiChrist rules through 10 Kings.

6. **Hathach** - The go between, an attendant of Esther - whom she sent to Mordecai (4:5-6)
His name means verily (“truly” or “indeed” or “just so”).
Interesting that the messenger between Mordecai and Esther is called “truth.”

The Holy Spirit is called “the spirit of truth” and is the method of communication between Christ and His people.

Like Mordecai - Yeshua adopted Israel (He took the place of their Father).

Like Mordecai - Yeshua was separated from Israel (when He ascended back to Heaven).

THE TIMELINE

The book opens in the 3rd year of the reign of Xerxes I.

Esther is taken to the King’s bed chamber in the 10th month of the 7th year of his reign. So four years pass between the feast of Chapter one, and the elevation of Esther to Queen. History says that Xerxes was planning and fighting a war with the Greeks, which he lost - badly. Maybe he got depressed and needed cheering up. And history says he loved women!!

The Purim story takes place in the 12th year of Xerxes and the 5th year of Esther’s role as Queen.

It never hit me before that Haman's death decree was written on the 13th of Nissan (the eve of Passover). (3:12) The same day that lots were cast. (3:7) At the first Passover - the “firstborn” were under a death decree.

Esther and the Jews fasted and prayed through the 14th, and 15th, to the 16th (3rd day!) when she went in before the King - and was accepted.

[Jerusalem is accepted in the person of Christ risen, who goes before His Father in Heaven on the 3rd day - with the Firstfruits.]

The first feast with the King and Haman was on the 16th. (The King couldn’t sleep that night.)

Mordecai was honored on the 17th, and then Haman is immediately escorted to the second banquet (feast) where the whole plot is exposed, and Haman is hanged on the 17th of Nissan.

Mordecai is given the signet ring (authority) of the king.

Mordecai is given Haman's kingdom.

AND Mordecai is "crowned" and made second in the Kingdom.

[As Yeshua is second to God the Father, and was crowned at his ascension following His resurrection. He was also given Satan’s kingdom on that day - yes - it remained for history to play itself out, but it was a done deal following Christ’s victory over every test of Satan.]

So- just as Christ won the right to fight for us - in the first month at His ascension, the big battle is not fought until the Second Coming which comes down at the end. Just as the battle for the Jews came in the 12th (last) month of the year.

Haman's 10 sons are not hanged until the 13th of Adar (12th month) - the same day Haman had chosen by lot to exterminate the Jews. Just so - in the last days, the “ten kings” rule with the beast (Rev 17:12-17). The plan to exterminate the Law keeping people of God. They will be burned up with the earth, in the seven last plagues.

NOTE: When they fought to defend themselves, and defeated their enemies - the Jews did NOT take the plunder. (9:15-16). Just so at the end of days - we will not take plunder.

[INCIDENTALLY: Archeologists tell us that the name Mordecai was very popular in Persia about this time.]

PURIM: Named for pur - the lot, because pur were cast for Haman to choose the day for exterminating the Jews. The Jews fought, and the LORD gave them much help (many people fought with them). The whole kingdom now feared Mordecai. They fought on the 13th of Adar (in the 12th month) - right at the END of the year. And they rested on the 14th. The Jews in Shushan, the capital also fought on the 14th and finally rested on the 15th. **To commemorate this great victory and deliverance**, Esther and Mordecai decreed that hence forward the Jews were to celebrate these two days every year. And PURIM is still celebrated by Jews the world over. **It is a day to send gifts (Esther 9:22).**

This year 2012, Purim is March 8th (a Thursday). Let us remember and celebrate the LORD who delivers, the LORD who provides for His people. I personally like to remember that the LORD has used women, as instruments of deliverance - like Deborah the judge and Esther the queen of Persia.

Whenever the story of Esther is read - even in the synagogue, the people will boo loudly when the name of Hamen is read. They cheer at the name of Mordecai, and they sigh sweetly at the name of Esther. Sitting in a Messianic synagogue on Purim and participating with the congregation was about the most FUN I ever remember having in “church.”

I see many parallels between Mordecai and Christ.

He adopts his cousin (replacing her Father), just as Christ steps in as the Mediator because mankind is separated from God THE Father. He is the kinsman redeemer. In Ezekiel we read of Yahweh adopting Israel and preparing Jerusalem as a bride (see Ezekiel 16:4-14).

Mordecai warns Esther about the plot to kill the King.
Christ (through Scriptures) has “warned us” that Satan seeks to replace God the Father.

Mordecai warns Esther about the plot to kill all Jews,
Christ has “warned us” that Satan will seek to wipe out all faithful Israelites.

He is honored and paraded before the citizens [triumphal entry] while a plot to kill him in progress.

A robe is put on him by the evil Haman, over his torn ash/dirt covered clothes of mourning. [Wicked King Herod put a purple robe of royalty over Christ to mock Him, and the soldiers put a crown of thorns on his head.]

Mordecai is finally crowned and made “second” in the kingdom, as Daniel and Joseph were. [Just so - Christ Jesus is now second to God the Father, and has been given all authority.]

Hosea 12:10 “I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets.”

A PROPHECY OF THE LAST DAYS

The King in our story - gives the people of God into the hands of the wicked Haman.

In the last days, the people of God (the saints) will be “given into his hand” of the little horn, “for a time, times and half a time” (3 and a part years) (Daniel 7:25). They will be given into the hands of Haman (The Little Horn of the Beast power with His “ten kings.”) The tables will be turned by the return of Christ in glory, who will fight for His people.

WE SHOULD EXPECT A DEATH PENALTY EDICT IN THE VERY LAST DAYS.

We must be prepared to die, rather than submit - to violate the law of Our God. We must “choose whom we will serve.” That is the message of Elijah.

AND Esther? If Esther was aware that she was supremely loved by the King, then why would she be afraid to come before him. Why would she think that she might be refused. Answer: - She was not sure. She did not feel loved by Xerxes. He had not even sent for her in a month.

“Let the king come today” to a banquet. The first letters of each word in this phrase spell - “Yahweh.” In some texts they are highlighted, to show that the name of Yahweh is indeed found in the book of Esther.

Why did Esther not reveal her petition at the first banquet? Oriental custom? Perhaps the spirit of the LORD cautioned her that the time was not ripe.

Esther displayed great courage and selfless devotion to her people.
Mordecai displayed courage in refusing to bow to Haman.
Daniel displayed courage, as did Joseph - to serve only Yahweh.

All these were brought by circumstances, and by the LORD to “a time such as this” for the preservation of their people. Each appeared at the height of a great world empire. In the last days, the 144,000 must stand with Christ, in covenant, before the greatest One-World empire in history. The 144,000 are the Daniel, the Joseph, the Mordecai and the Esther of the last days.

“For **if you remain silent at this time**, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but **you** and your father's family **will perish**. And who knows but that you have come to your

royal position for such a time as this?" (Est 4:14 NIV)

WE WILL STAND - ONLY IF WE ARE INDWELT BY HIS SPIRIT!

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess,
for He who promised is faithful.” Hebrews 10:23 NIV

Shalom

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