

# STUDY NOTES FROM KAREN HOERDEL'S "JEWISH FEAST STUDIES" TEACHING SERIES

## **Purim: The Story of Esther**

Feast of Esther  
Feast of Lots

Esther 9:27-28 - a happy two day feast

The Megillah - (The Scroll) Esther is read

Events occur in Persia after 536 BC when Babylon fell to Persia

Shushan was the ancient capital located 200 miles east of Babylon

Esther 4:8, 8:4 - the scepter

The Scepter = Jesus, the Messiah

Numbers 24:17

Psalm 45:6

John 14:6 - only way to approach God

Hebrews 1:8

Story shows God's provision, love, protection and deliverance

Key Verse = Esther 4:14 -

"For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

## **Name of God in Esther (Esther 1:20)**

It has been observed by many that the name of God is not found in the book of Esther. This is more remarkable in view of the fact that in the 167 verses of the book, the king is mentioned 192 times; his kingdom 26 times; and his title "Ahasuerus", is given 29 times. However, in the ancient Hebrew text there were 5 places where the name of God was hidden, being abbreviated - JHVH for JeHoVaH, 4 times, and EHYEH (I Am that I Am) once. These letters were used as acrostics in certain statements and in 3 of the MSS. They were written larger than the rest of the text so that they stood out boldly on the scroll. The statements wherein these letters occurred in the Hebrew text are:

1. All the wives shall give. Uttered by Memucan (Esther 1:20)
2. Let the king and Haman come this day. Uttered by Queen Esther (5:4)
3. This availeth me nothing. Uttered by Haman (5:13)

4. That there was evil determined against him. Uttered by the author of Esther (7:7)

5. Who is he, and where is he? (7:5)

This is where the acrostic EHYEH was used while in the above points JHVH was used.

### **The Purim Story**

In the book of Esther (3:5-7), we read that Haman, the Prime Minister of Persia and enemy of the Jews, observed a certain Jewish man, Mordecai, who refused to bow before Haman or pay him homage, because Mordecai was a servant of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and did not want to bow to anyone except the Lord.

As a result of Mordecai's behavior, Haman sought to destroy all of the Jews throughout the Persian Empire. As he cast the lots (Purim) to determine the day and month to destroy the Jews, it fell on the 13th day of Adar. Thus Haman wrote a death decree against the Jews giving all the provinces of Persia the royal power to kill the Jewish people on the determined day.

Esther was a Jewish girl, a relative of Mordecai, chosen by the King himself to be the queen of Persia. When she heard of the decree, she called for a 3 day fast to prepare herself to go before king Xerxes (Esther 4:15-16). Esther knew that if she came before the king without him specifically calling for her, her life could only be spared if the king extended his scepter to her as a showing of favor in his eyes. She was ready to die for her people. So, at the end of this fast, Esther went boldly before the king to plead for her life and the lives of her people.

Though the book of Esther does not mention God directly, we know that favor comes from Him, and Esther did find favor in the king's eyes. She was brought to the kingdom "for such a time as this". The king responded to Esther's plea and had Haman hung on the very gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. Mordecai was raised to a high position in the government and was given the power to issue a counter decree that protected the lives of the Jews and gave them the right to defend themselves and destroy all who would attack them on the 13th day of Adar.

On this day and several days following, the Jews overpowered their enemies and gained their freedom. Thus the Feast of Purim, declaring their deliverance, was celebrated on the 13th, 14th and 15th days of Adar, the twelfth month of the Jewish biblical year, which falls approximately in March/April.

### **Spiritual Fulfillment of Purim**

Throughout the history of the Jewish people, almost in every generation, there rose a people who wanted to destroy Jews and the memory of them from the face of the earth. But the Lord, in His mercy, and because He is a covenant keeping God, saved His people from trouble every time, even if just a remnant of them remained.

The victory of the Jewish people in the book of Esther points to the victory of God over Satan and the power of our faith through prayer and fasting over the contempt of the wicked against the righteous.

Ultimately, Purim points to the preservation and redemption of God's people through the sacrifice of Messiah Yeshua (Jesus Christ) on the cross at Calvary. Purim represents the deliverance of God's people.

God, through the prophet Daniel (see Daniel Chapter 7), prophesied there would arise four Gentile powers during Israel's history to exercise dominion over her. Each Gentile empire would be increasingly hostile and anti-Semitic. The Babylonian, the Greek, and the Persian empires oppressed Israel, but none compared to the vicious hatred of the coming fourth and final empire, the revived Roman Empire under the leadership of the Antichrist. Daniel prophesied of that time, "and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered." (Daniel 12:1).

God has often delivered Israel in the past, but their full deliverance awaits the coming of the Deliverer (Romans 11:26). For only when Jesus (the rightful Heir to David's throne) comes, will the yoke of Gentile oppression be forever removed from Israel's neck.